

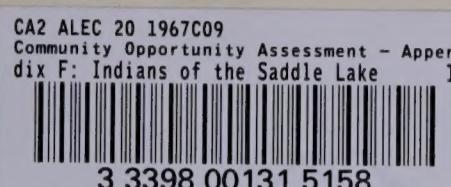
Alberta Executive Council  
Human Resources Research & Development

Alberta Provincial Library

## Appendix F

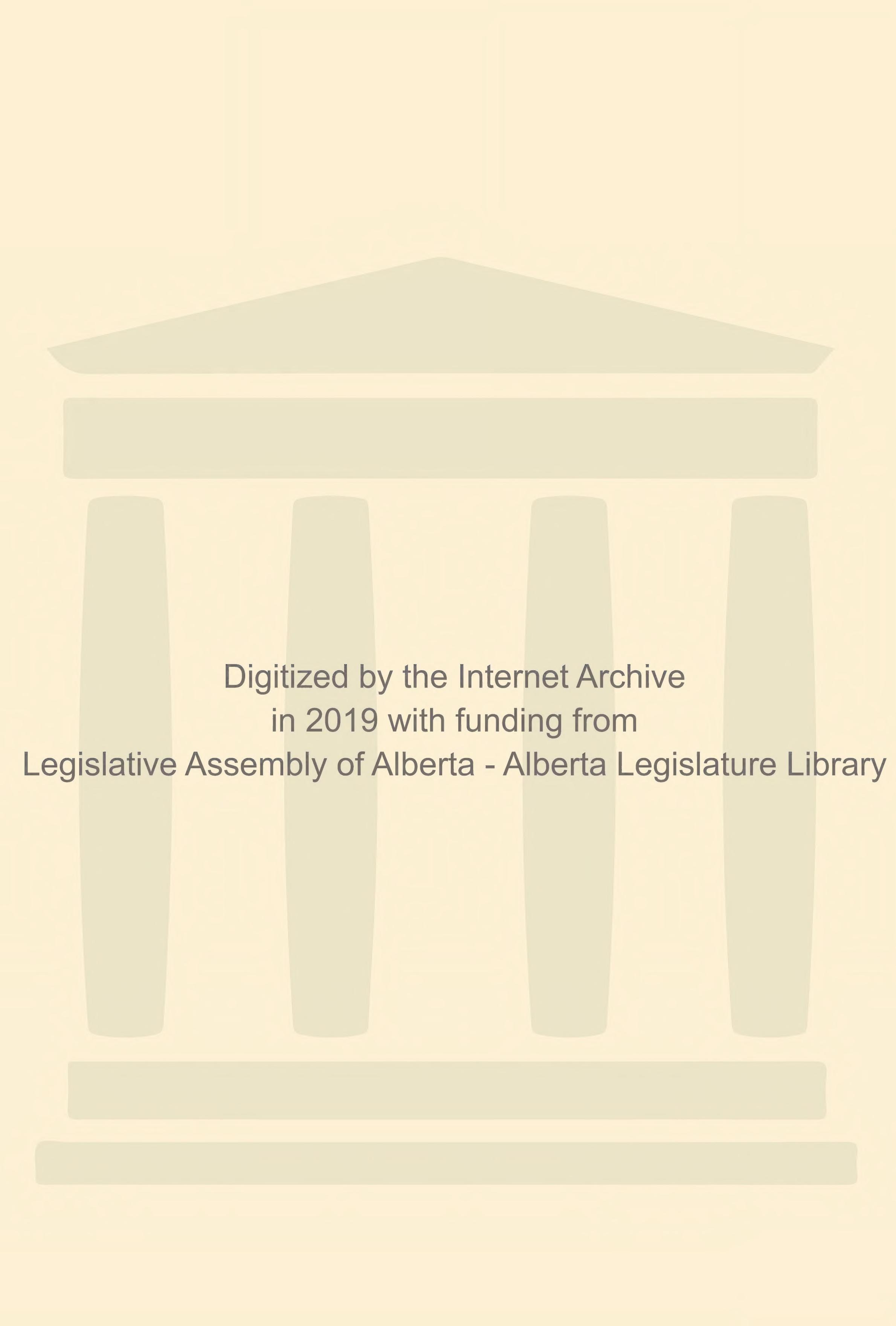
# INDIANS OF THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE

CA2 ALEC 20  
67 C09  
C.1



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT



A faint, light-colored watermark of the Alberta Legislature building is visible in the background. The building features a prominent central tower with a green dome and four smaller towers at the corners of its base. The entire watermark is slightly faded.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from

Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

## **Appendix F**

# **INDIANS OF THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE**

## **COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT**

**MORTON NEWMAN**

**Human Resources Research and Development  
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL - GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA**

**Edmonton, Alberta  
March, 1967**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
List of Tables .....	iii
List of Figures .....	iv
CHAPTER	
I THE AREA OF THE STUDY: THE SADDLE LAKE INDIAN RESERVE .....	1
Location .....	1
Soil and Topography .....	1
II THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY .....	5
The Method of Interviewing .....	6
Major Topics of Saddle Lake Interview Schedule .....	7
Sources of Data .....	9
Selecting a Sample .....	12
III THE CURRENT SITUATION .....	15
Housing .....	15
Water Supply .....	19
Health .....	20
Summary .....	23
IV SOCIAL ORGANIZATION .....	25
History .....	25
Family Structure .....	26
Kinship Relations and Geographical Proximity .....	27
Role Definition .....	28
Common-Law Marriages and Children .....	28
Problems Within Family Structure .....	29
The Community .....	30
Summary: Sources of Unity .....	34
Summary: Sources of Disunity .....	36
The Reserve as a Municipality .....	36
V THE ECONOMY OF THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE .....	43
The Economic History of the Reserve .....	43
Current Earned Income .....	44
Transfer Payments .....	51
Total Family Incomes From All Sources .....	55
Current Programs for the Reserve .....	56
Future Prospects for the Reserve .....	59
Summary .....	61
VI RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LARGER WORLD .....	65
Transportation and Communication Resources .....	65
Relations with Towns Near the Reserve .....	67
Relations with the City .....	70
Relationship of Indian Affairs Branch with Reserves ..	73
Salesmen .....	77
Summary .....	78
VII EDUCATION .....	79
Pre-Integrated Education .....	79
Education Problems Today .....	84
Bluequills Residential School and its Administration ..	86
Summary .....	89
Educational Opportunities for Adults .....	91
Summary .....	96

	<u>Page</u>
VIII      THE RESERVE INDIAN AND THE LAW .....	97
The Female Offenders .....	97
The Male Offenders .....	99
IX      SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	101
Summary .....	101
Conclusions .....	101
Economic and Community Development .....	103
Education .....	104
The Indian Affairs Bureau .....	106

LIST OF TABLES

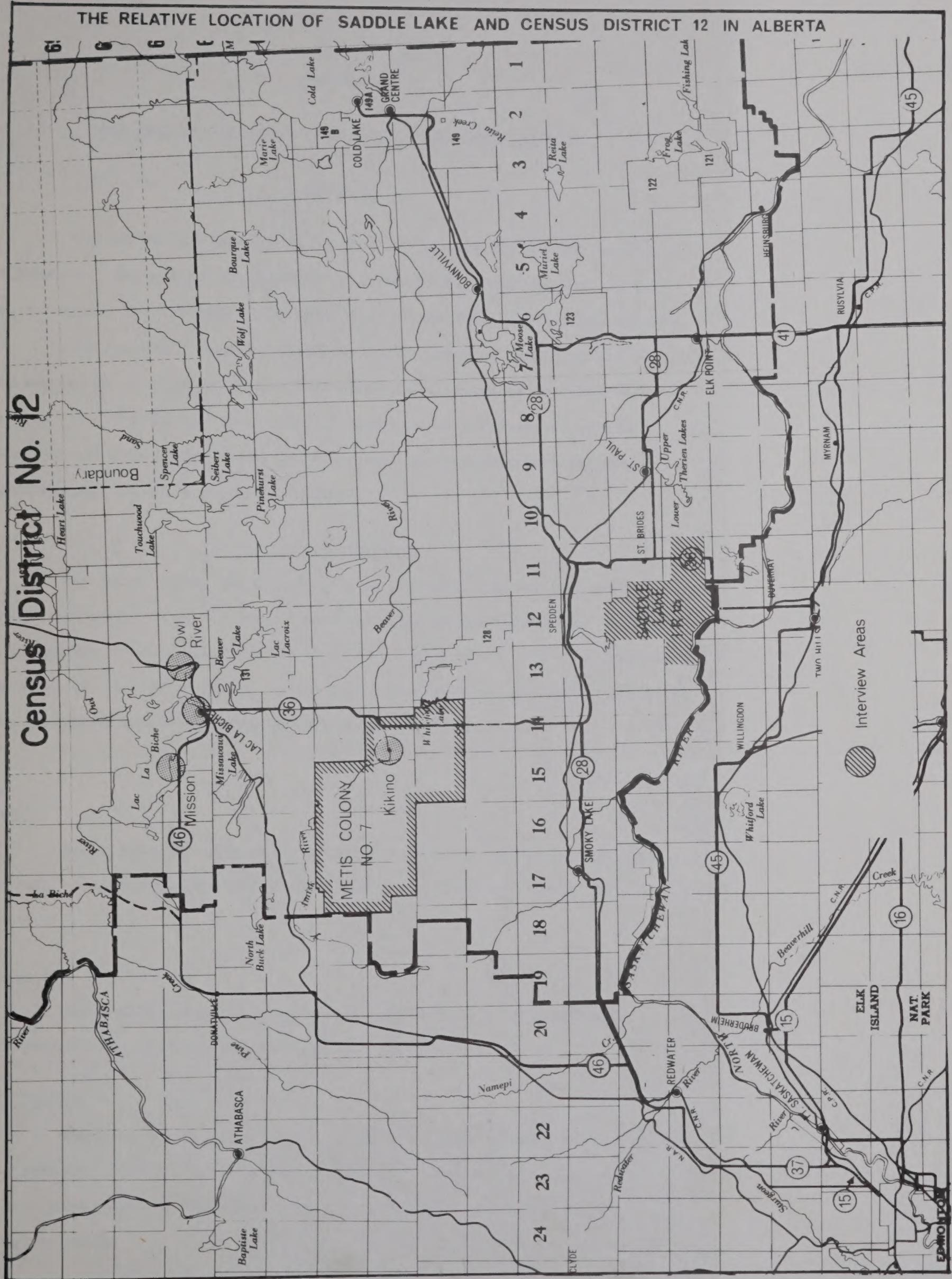
	<u>Page</u>
III - 1 Types and Numbers of Homes on Saddle Lake Reserve Sample .....	16
III - 2 Edwards' Housing Scores for Saddle Lake Reserve Sample .....	17
III - 3 The Average Size of the Saddle Lake Reserve Families in Study Sample .....	18
III - 4 Sources of Water Supply of Saddle Lake Reserve Sample Members .....	19
IV - 1 Types of Families in the Saddle Lake Reserve Sample .....	26
V - 1 Income Earned During 1965 by Households in Sample .....	51
V - 2 Transfer Payments, in 1965, by Type of Payment .....	52
V - 3 Families Receiving Social Assistance in the Saddle Lake Reserve Sample by Duration of Recipience ..	52
V - 4 Total Family Revenue From all Sources for Saddle Lake Reserve Sample Members .....	55
VI - 1 Visits by Members of the Saddle Lake Sample to the City .....	70
VI - 2 Reserve Members' Willingness to Move to City .....	71
VII - 1 Per Cent Indian Children in Grade 9 Reaching Grade 12 .....	85
VII - 2 Indian Children Reaching University .....	90
VII - 3 Federal Government's Cost for Indian People in Fort McMurray Program .....	94

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Map      Saddle Lake Reserve and C.D. 12 in Relation to Edmonton .....	v

# Census District No. 12

THE RELATIVE LOCATION OF SADDLE LAKE AND CENSUS DISTRICT 12 IN ALBERTA





## CHAPTER I

### THE AREA OF THE STUDY: THE SADDLE LAKE INDIAN RESERVE

#### Location

The Saddle Lake reserve is located 103 miles northeast of the City of Edmonton. The reserve is situated in Township 58, Range 12, West of the 4th Meridian. Its position is 15 miles west of the Town of St. Paul, Alberta.

The reserve at present comprises 63,000 acres of land. At its extremities it is 17 miles long and 17 miles wide. Previous to 1922, the reserve also included the nine miles of land east of the reserve. However, this land was sold to the Township of St. Paul and now comprises the area extending east of the Town of St. Brides.

#### Soil and Topography

According to the Research Council of Alberta,<sup>1</sup> in its 1962 study of the soil zones of Alberta, the land in and around the Saddle Lake reserve is classified as being in the black soil zone. This black soil zone includes the areas of St. Paul, Vegreville, Camrose, Wetaskiwin and Red Deer. The total zone is characterized by the Research Council as follows:

#### Climate

Annual precipitation averages between 17 and 19 inches and droughts are rare. Evaporation is lower and hot winds less frequent than in other zones.

#### Vegetation

Grassland which has been partially invaded by woodlands (mainly deciduous trees), often referred to as a parkland.

#### Soil Profile

The normal profile has a dark to very dark brown surface horizon that averages 12 to 14 inches in depth. The more compact horizon is brown to dark brown, and the lime horizon is usually found at 24 to 40 inches below the surface.

### Fertility

Soils in this zone are the most fertile in the province and they have, in the surface foot, three to four times as much nitrogen and organic matter as there is in the average brown or grey wooded soil.

### Land Use

A high percentage of the zone is arable. Wheat of fairly good quality can be grown.

The land on the Saddle Lake reserve, though it is in the black soil zone, does have some limitations. Its topography consists of gently rolling knolls and there is some stoniness throughout the reserve.

The Research Council, classifying the reserve's land according to ARDA's Soil Capability Classification for Agriculture, rates most of the reserve as 3T soil, and one portion as 2S and 2T soil. ARDA has six classifications of agricultural soil, with Class 1 as the best and Class 6 as the poorest.

#### Class 2

Class 2 soils require careful soil management including conservation practices to prevent soil deterioration or to improve air and water relations when the soils are cultivated. The limitations are not severe and the practices are easy to apply. Moderate limitations singly, or in combination, may include the effects: (1) topography, (2) slight to moderate damage from erosion, (3) somewhat less than ideal soil depth, (4) some difficulty in tillage owing to soil structure or stoniness, (5) wetness correctable by drainage but existing permanently as a moderate limitation, (6) occasional damaging overflow, (7) slow permeability of the soil, (8) moderate climatic limitations on soil management and use.

Soils in this class have good water-holding capacity and are either well supplied with plant nutrients or highly responsive to inputs of fertilizer. They are moderately high to high in productivity for a fairly wide range of crops.

#### Class 3

Class 3 soils have more severe restrictions than those in Class 2 and conservation practices are usually more difficult to apply and maintain. Limitations adversely affect the timing and ease of tillage, planting and harvesting, the choice of crops, the application of conservation practices, or some combination of these limitations. Class 3 crops are medium to moderately high in productivity for a range of crops.

The southeast corner of the reserve has 2S and 2T soil. This area is adjacent to the land that was sold by the reserve in 1922 to the Township of St. Paul. Only the topography prevents it from apparently being

the finest land in Alberta. The remainder of the reserve has an ARDA soil rating of 3T. This is slightly poorer than 2S and 2T soil with the general difference being more rolling knolls and more sloughs.

The topography problem is merely that the land is not flat. The slightly rolling hills require that the farmers use contour farming and other methods to prevent soil erosion.

As one of the Research Council's staff members stated: "There is no problem with the soil, only a slight problem with the topography. Any-one should be able to make a good living there."

Of the reserve's 63,000 acres, only 6,000 are being used for cattle and crop farming. Two thousand of these acres are being leased to non-reserve farmers and the remainder is used by reserve members. Of this 4,000 acres, 1,800 are used by two reserve farmers and the remaining 2,200 are used in parcels averaging 80 acres by other reserve members. Only five of the reserve members actually farm as a means of livelihood.

---

FOOTNOTE:

<sup>1</sup>Wm. Odynsky, Research Council of Alberta, Soil Zones of Alberta, as Established by Alberta Soil Surveys, January, 1962.



## CHAPTER II

### THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY

This study was designed to analyze the nature of the human resources of one segment of the Indian population of Alberta. More specifically, we are concerned with the Indian people living on Federal Government protectorates -- reserves. The Band that was chosen for observation was the Cree Indian population that resides on the Saddle Lake reserve near St. Paul, Alberta.

The study of human resources requires the analysis of the interrelationships between psychological, social and political factors on the one hand, and geographical and economical aspects on the other hand. The interaction of these two groups of factors produces the way of life of a people, and this way of life is what the present study will deal with.

The Saddle Lake reserve was chosen for investigation because of three factors. First, the Cree Band on the reserve is one of the largest Bands in Alberta, with 1,500 members.

Second, the reserve, with a population of 3,500 is the largest of five reserves in the St. Paul area and is representative of the five reserves under the jurisdiction of the St. Paul Indian Affairs Bureau.

Third, the reserve is 103 miles from Edmonton and 15 miles from the Town of St. Paul. It was assumed that the close proximity to both a town and a city would afford an opportunity to assess the Indian people's attitudes toward non-reserve life. Also, we could assess the people's attitudes toward the desirability of relocation in all types of non-reserve areas. The reserve was set up so that it could function as a self-sufficient community only if everyone were farming. Since this is obviously not the case, we were interested in assessing the amount and types of contact the reserve members had with the non-reserve world.

An advantage which resulted from selecting the Saddle Lake reserve for study was the availability of a family with whom the interviewer could reside for the period of the research in the field. This allowed the interviewer a closer relationship with one reserve family and an introduction to

all of the other reserve members. In addition, it afforded the interviewer first-hand experience of the way of life on the reserve.

#### The Method of Interviewing

The present study attempted to view the reserve's human resources from the Indian people's frame of reference, as well as from an outside point of view. Thus, the assessment consisted of three aspects. The first aspect was a description of the physical conditions of the reserve; that is, the kinds of houses, the standard of living, the general health of the population, the incomes of the population and the needs of the area. Second, we tried to understand and relate the attitudes of the population concerning the different aspects of reserve life and the non-reserve world. It seemed incumbent upon the analysts to include this second aspect as a means of understanding the significance of the physical conditions. For example, it is important to understand why, and if, a person on the reserve chooses to receive monthly social assistance payments rather than farming his own land, or looking for work in the nearby towns, or relocating his family where there are better job opportunities. Third, the interviewers indicated both observations, from their own frame of reference, and recommendations for possible changes in the reserve structure and the programs available for the reserve.

It must be mentioned that attempting to adequately achieve the above-mentioned tasks in eight weeks is approaching recklessness. Each aspect of this study would appear to require at least that much time. To achieve a suitable study in so short a time, we tried to become totally involved in the intimate life of the reserve in order to view the conditions with some regularity.

Two of the interviewers were Indian women. The first was a university student from the Blood reserve near Cardston. The second woman was an Edmonton housewife who was originally from a Cree reserve in Saskatchewan. In addition to the necessary qualifications for interviewing, it was felt that these women would be able to facilitate a quicker achievement of rapport with the reserve members. The Cree woman was fluent in the Cree language and this was felt to be necessary with some of the older reserve

members who quite possibly could speak no English.

The Research Assistant who was responsible for this study was a non-Indian male. This person lived with one of the reserve families and, through his close association with them, was able to meet all of the other reserve members on a social basis before the formal interviewing began. This pre-interview stage of socializing lasted three weeks for all of the interviewers and, through hindsight, appears to have been a crucial factor in our establishing rapport with the reserve members so that they were willing later to answer our questionnaire.

During the last two weeks of our study we were required, through the unforeseen necessity for departure by one of the female interviewers, to hire one of the Band members as an interviewer. This person, a female, had previously done the Census survey on the reserve and was extremely capable in interviewing. In fact, it seems quite likely that, with the possible exception of an outside supervisor to structure the study, all future interviewing on Indian reserves could be done solely by Band members.

The majority of the assessment information was derived from formal interviewing of reserve members, which was begun about June 1, 1966. Following is a list of the major aspects of the interview schedule, with a brief explanation of each.

#### Major Topics of Saddle Lake Interview Schedule

##### Households

Information was gathered on the size and structure of the family, their occupational and educational backgrounds, and their incomes.

##### Edwards' Housing Scale

This is a scale for rating the conditions of a house and the facilities it contains, developed for use in the rural Prairie Provinces.

##### Medical

The medical condition of each family member, the types of severe illnesses and disabilities experienced by family members, and the incidence of infant and adult mortality in the family.

### Occupations

This includes the present occupations of family members and their preferences for jobs.

### Urban Contacts

This aspect concerns the type and frequency of contact with the cities and the reserve members' attitudes toward visiting, living and working in the cities.

### Attitudes Toward Education

These questions were about the people's attitudes toward the present educational system and their perceptions of the problems Indian children encounter in this and previous systems.

### Income and Consumption

This section consists of questions about the sources of income -- wages, social assistance, pensions, disability insurance, family allowance, foster care -- and amounts of money received and required by reserve families, and the ways in which the money is spent.

### Indian Affairs Branch

This section is concerned with the attitudes of the reserve members towards the Indian Affairs Branch.

### Social Assistance

These questions attempted to discover the meaning of social assistance to the reserve members, both attitudinally and with regard to their standard of living.

The questionnaire contained mostly open-ended questions. This seemed essential so that the Indian people would not be burdened by numerous questions and would be able to express their full thoughts on each question. The average interview lasted one hour and forty-five minutes. Interviews with the older members of the reserve, due to their inadequate or nonexistent knowledge of English, took two to two-and-one-half hours.

The Cree-speaking interviewer was especially helpful in interviewing the reserve's older members. Whenever either of the other two interviewers encountered a family that was inadequately fluent in English, they rescheduled the interview and the Cree interviewer administered the questionnaire.

### Sources of Data

The interviewers had diverse areas for acquiring data. All were done by interviews, but the settings varied.

The major setting for interviews was with reserve members in their homes. The interviewers also spent a considerable amount of time in discussion with Indian Affairs Branch staff members, both in the Edmonton and the St. Paul offices.

Because of the high migration rate during the summer, 27 interviews were done in Lethbridge. The interviewers located the reserve members in their places of work in the sugar beet area and interviewed them, either while in the fields during the day or in their homes in the evenings.

The interviewers, in trying to ascertain the Indian's view of the problems of city life, spent one day interviewing reserve members who were then in the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol. The interviews were arranged with the permission of the Gaol's warden.

There were six main methodological aspects that require comment:

1. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND ABSTRACTION. We frequently encountered instances where the people were not able to understand our questions. Thus, rewording and rephrasing questions often was necessary. Questions that were not specifically applicable to the person's present situation were often not answered or answered inadequately. For example, we asked all members of our sample what they thought was the minimum amount of money per year that a family of seven on the reserve would need in order to have the bare essentials for survival. Despite rewording and rephrasing, only 30 per cent of the sample were able to give any estimate. As another example, many of the people had difficulty stating how much money they earned or received in 1965. The majority stated a monthly figure and we had to assume that it was typical of their income for the whole year. Also, we found that some questions were only remotely within the realm of the people's actual experience. For example, we asked the people whether the city, as a whole, was good or bad. Most of them usually had only been to one small area of the city to visit relatives and friends and thus could not do more than relate this section of the city as a whole.

Thus, we received answers such as, "I don't know," or, "It's okay." The interviewers could only infrequently draw the people into making assessments that went beyond the people's actual experience. Consequently we had to readapt our approach to the immediate situation of each household.

2. LANGUAGE. Most of the reserve members were sufficiently fluent in English so that the interviews could be conducted totally in English. Whenever there was a family that could not understand English, the Cree-speaking interviewer was brought in to do the interview. This interviewer, during her normal interviewing chores with English-speaking reserve members, found that it was beneficial to restate and rephrase the questions in Cree when the people appeared not to understand the question as stated in English.

3. RAPPORT. The first step in the establishment of rapport was a meeting by the Research Director with the Band Council in April to obtain permission to make the study and to explain its purpose. The Band Council members communicated this information to the reserve members and this helped also. Rapport was further established by the interviewers through socializing with the reserve members for the first three weeks of our study. The male interviewer travelled with the family he was living with, thus being afforded the opportunity of meeting most of the reserve members through the introduction of one of the families. The family also told all of the members the purpose of the study and asked them to co-operate with the interviewers. The idea of a white man living on the reserve with one of the families was instrumental in facilitating a good rapport with the reserve members. The female interviewers were already both acquainted with some reserve members. During the first three weeks they spent much time driving around the reserve and were invited into many homes to chat and have tea.

Some of the people appeared to completely misconstrue our purpose on the reserve. They immediately began to complain about the welfare payments or the Indian Affairs Branch, apparently thinking that we were Federal Government staff who had come to correct the misadministration of the local Branch staff. Their eagerness to discuss the inadequacies of

the reserve situation were nevertheless beneficial to the interviewers.

4. THE MALE INTERVIEWER. The Research Director advised the male interviewer not to enter any homes where an adult male member was not present. This was a precaution taken against any negative attitudes that might be developed through gossip within the reserve. The precaution was necessary but it did limit the times that could be used for interviewing. Thus, the male interviewer spent most days in discussion with the Indian Affairs Branch staff and local townspeople and did interviewing in the evenings. Daytime interviews were made only when appointments had been arranged.

5. LETHBRIDGE. The three interviewers lived in a hotel in Lethbridge for a week and travelled from there each day to the towns in the area. Some of these towns, such as Vauxhall, were 60 miles away. They initially thought that all of the reserve members would be in the same general area, but found that they were scattered throughout the region in groups of two or three families. The families were occasionally able to tell us where families might be in other areas. However, many of the journeys were fruitless. There were 2,000 Saskatchewan Indians in the Lethbridge area in addition to the 2,000 from Alberta, and this made it difficult for us to ask people if there were "any Indians working in the area".

6. FORT SASKATCHEWAN. The male interviewer and the Cree-speaking female interviewer went to Fort Saskatchewan Gaol where they interviewed the Indian inmates from the reserves near St. Paul. The male interviewer talked with the males and the female interviewer talked with the females. The female inmates spoke freely but quietly because they suspected a guard was outside of the door listening. The interviewer stated that this was, in fact, true and that the guard refused to leave when requested to do so by the interviewer.

The male interviewer was able to create rapport by stating the purpose of the study and then telling the inmate about the family he had lived with on the reserve. This latter aspect seemed quite crucial in eliminating any uncertainties the inmate might have had. In addition,

most of the inmates seemed willing and anxious to talk to anyone from outside of the prison.

#### Selecting a Sample

The Indian Affairs Branch provided a list of all the Band families. The 180 families were divided into four basic subdivisions -- by age group of the head of the household, welfare status, size of family, and religion.

The age groups were: under 35, 35 to 55, 56 to 70, over 70.

The welfare status groups were: none, occasional (up to three months), temporary (three to nine months), and permanent.

The sizes of the families were: two or less, three to six, seven to ten, over ten.

The religions of the reserve are Roman Catholic and United Church. The religious subdivision is highly correlated with the geographic division of the reserve.

The reserve statistics were distributed in each of these categories. The original sample was intended to be as close to representative of the reserve's proportion, for each category, as was possible.

The actual interviewing brought changes to our sample. We found that the Branch's Band list was slightly outdated (December, 1964) as to the welfare status and composition of some of the families. For instance, some of the families had three or four more children than were listed on the Band list. This occurred most often because the family was caring for the children of either an unmarried daughter, a relative whose marital partner had left, or because some adult on the reserve had died. This tended to enlarge -- though not invalidate -- the number of school children included in the interviews. For example, though we had only interviewed 57 per cent of the families on the reserve, these families contained 87 per cent of all the school children on the reserve.

Another problem was with division by religion. Some of the families had a husband of one religion and wife of the other. However, since we were interviewing in patterned areas of the reserve, we were able to use geography as a main factor, rather than religion.

Our final sample of 102 families represented 57 per cent of the families on the reserve. It varies by no more than three per cent from the originally planned sample (i.e. in one instance we have 60 per cent of a total category and in other categories, 54 per cent).



## CHAPTER III

### THE CURRENT SITUATION

This section will deal with the living conditions on the reserve. The main headings will be housing, water supply, and health. Though this discussion should have comparative figures for non-reserve rural communities, we felt that our information will contrast sharply enough with what most readers know of white communities.

#### Housing

The reserve has three basic types of houses: log houses, wood-frame houses constructed by the Indian Affairs Branch, and wood-frame houses constructed by individuals. Within each type of house the only variation is the number of rooms constructed.

The log houses are built of upright logs, with a few having a mud and straw mixture adhering to the outside of the houses for added protection from the cold.

The "welfare houses" vary according to the period they were built. The older houses, built from 1959 to 1964, contain a kitchen, living room and either two or three bedrooms. The newer houses, built from 1964 to 1966, contain a living room, kitchen and four bedroom. All the welfare houses are wood-frame dwellings with shingled roofs. The painting of the exterior of the houses is left to the initiative of the residents. Starting in the Fall of 1966, the welfare houses will also have a basement and will be wired for electricity. The cost of materials for the pre-1966 welfare houses was approximately \$4,000. The cost of the newer houses, including electrical wiring, is estimated at about \$7,000. The St. Paul Branch of Indian Affairs anticipates constructing 15 welfare houses on the Saddle Lake reserve during the 1966-67 budget year.

The "self-constructed" wood-frame houses vary between one and six rooms. In these cases, the resident bought the materials and built the house himself. In some cases, these "self-constructed" houses are nothing more than abandoned shacks that families are now living in.

Table 1 indicates the housing distribution in our sample. The

welfare houses, though paid for by the Indian Affairs Branch, are allocated by the Band Council. The Council solicits applications from the Band members and then assigns the available houses to the applicants who are most in need. The Council's criteria for need are based solely on the number of members in the family. Two points are awarded each for the husband and the wife, and one point for each child. The criteria do not include the family's income. Probably the Council feels that all members are equally poor, but the interviewers found instances where two men who earned between \$4,000 and \$5,000 per year had received welfare houses.

CHAPTER III TABLE 1

TYPES AND NUMBERS OF HOMES ON SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE

	Log Houses			Welfare Houses			Wood-Frame Houses	
	1 Rm.	2 Rm.	3 Rm.	4 Rm.	5 Rm.	6 Rm.	1-2 Rm.	3-6 Rm.
No.	20	20	13	3	20	10	3	13
%	19.6	19.6	12.8	2.9	19.2	9.8	2.9	12.8
Combined	52%			32.3%			15 7%	

The two men mentioned above also illustrate another apparent fact -- nepotism. Neither men had more than two children in the family, yet they received welfare houses which are supposedly allocated on the point system. The only apparent explanation is that one of the men is a Councillor and the other man has a brother on the Council.

Kinship and nepotism appear to be the main factors in voting on the reserve, as will be explained in the section on Social Organization.

The Edwards' Housing Scale was constructed to compare the conditions of individual homes with the average rural home in the Prairie Provinces. The 30 categories which comprise the scale are listed in the appendix. Under the Edwards' Scale the minimum score that could be considered a decent home would be nine. The scores from the Saddle Lake reserve, found in Table 2, show that three fourths of the homes on the reserve are below the minimum standard for the rest of the Prairies. Eighty four per cent of the homes have 11 points or less out of the total 30 points on the Edwards' Housing Scale and 57.7 per cent have five points or less. In fact, the average score for the reserve is only six and one-half points, considerably lower than the score for the average rural Prairie home.

### CHAPTER III TABLE 2

#### EDWARDS' HOUSING SCORES FOR SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE

<u>SCORES</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
0 points	1	1.0
1	8	8.1
2	18	18.2
3	10	10.1
4	15	15.2
5	5	5.0
6 - 9	17	17.2
10 - 11	9	9.1
12 - 18	14	14.1
19 - 30	<u>2</u>	<u>2.0</u>
	99	100.0

Three other population factors on the reserve are startling: the number of persons in each household, the number of persons per room in each home, and the number of children under 21 years of age in each home. With the large number of people per family and the previously-mentioned small number of rooms per home, the number of persons per room will obviously be great. Once again the statistics, shown in Table 3, indicate this clearly. The average Saddle Lake reserve home has 2.6 persons per room. In addition, 25.8 per cent of the homes have between 3.6 and six persons per room, while only 12.9 per cent have one person or less.

The apparently overcrowded conditions in the homes will affect the school children significantly because the children who are bussed to school each day must return to their homes on the bus immediately after school, thus allowing them no time to study in the school library. The average home on this reserve has five children under 21 years of age. This number includes four school children per home. Thirteen per cent of the homes, in fact, have between nine and 14 children under 21 years of age.

### CHAPTER III TABLE 3

#### THE AVERAGE SIZE OF THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE FAMILIES IN STUDY SAMPLE

<u>PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD</u>	<u>NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
1	2	2
2	6	12
3 - 4	15	53
5 - 6	14	77
7 - 8	29	217
9 - 10	17	162
11 - 12	13	149
13 - 14	2	27
15 and over	4	62
	102	761

$$761 \div 102 = 7.5$$

The above statistics suggest one of many reasons for the high drop-out rate of Indian school children.

The Indian Affairs Branch has recently instituted a new type of housing program for reserve members. Any member of the reserve who is

working away from the reserve all the year round, and is not living on the reserve, can apply for a loan from the Branch to buy a house and land near where he is working. The loan is for a maximum of \$8,500. The repayment of the loan does not begin for five years. If, after five years, the Branch finds that the house and grounds have been properly cared for, the loan is cancelled and becomes an outright grant. Thus, the Indian owns the house outright and has no payments to make. The purpose of this program is to encourage more reserve members to leave the reserve and find permanent jobs in the towns and cities.

#### Water Supply

As the data in Table 4 indicate, 51.6 per cent of the families in the sample had access to nearby wells. The remaining 25.2 per cent who used well water had to travel distances of between one-quarter and five miles to get water. Twenty-three per cent of the families in the sample used only creek or slough water.

CHAPTER III TABLE 4

#### SOURCES OF WATER SUPPLY OF SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE MEMBERS

	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
A well within 50 yards of home	51	51.6
A well between 50 yards and one mile	21	21.2
A well between one mile and two miles	3	3.0
A well between two miles and five miles	1	1.0
Uses creek or slough water only	23	23.2
	99	100.0

The nurse in the Saddle Lake reserve's health clinic reported that she made an analysis of water supplies on the reserve in the Spring of 1966. The results showed that four fifths of the wells on the reserve were contaminated. One of the foreign objects found in a well was a dead cat.

Thus, with 80 per cent of the wells on the reserve contaminated, and with 23 per cent of the reserve families using only creek or slough water, approximately 85 per cent of the families on the reserve had contaminated water to drink.

The wells, when originally constructed, were all apparently capped. However, either through poor construction or poor materials, the capping of the wells became inoperative within one year and the families remained with uncapped wells.

#### Health

Permission could not be obtained to check the "personal" health records of each member of the Saddle Lake reserve. Therefore, our information is based solely on three sources: the interviews with reserve members; the information verbally supplied by the nurse in the reserve's health clinic; and the data obtained from the hospital records in the St. Paul office of the Indian Affairs Branch.

#### Tuberculosis

Although no one in the interview sample stated that they were presently afflicted with tuberculosis, 30.2 per cent said that at one time or another at least one member of the family had tuberculosis. This means that one out of every three reserve families has had a case of tuberculosis at some time in its history. This is of course far higher than the rate for white Canadian families having histories of tuberculosis. The majority of families that had a tuberculosis victim (55 per cent) reported that the only person afflicted was a child, while three per cent of the families stated that four or five people in the family had been afflicted. The basic causes of tuberculosis -- poor clothing, poor diet, and inadequate housing -- are all prevalent in high proportions on the reserve.

#### Child Deaths

One of the most obvious indicators of poor health conditions and poor facilities on the reserve is the number of deaths of people 12 years of age and under. Our figures are complete for the number of deaths of children up to 12 years of age. However, as the nurse at the health clinic stated, it is difficult to know the number of still-births because Indian women often consider them as miscarriages. Of the families interviewed, 54.5 per cent have had at least one child die before the age of one year, and 10.1 per cent have had between five and nine

children die. Of the families who have lost children through death, in 71.7 per cent of cases the deaths all occurred before 1955 and in only 8.7 per cent of cases had all deaths occurred since 1955. This tends to indicate that either the health conditions or the medical treatment, or both, have improved significantly in the last ten years. The lower infant mortality rate, coupled with a constant birth rate, causes a situation of overcrowding on the reserve and in the homes. The rate of permanent departure from the reserve has not changed and this makes the likelihood of worsening health conditions quite possible in the near future.

#### Children's Illnesses

The health clinic nurse stated that the most prevalent illness of the babies (under six months of age) on the reserve is stomach disorder. She reported that the contaminated water supply on the reserve is the obvious cause of the illness.

#### Disability

Of the people interviewed, 33 per cent of the families have at least one member who is presently disabled. Seven and a half per cent of the sample have only the father disabled and 8.5 per cent have only the mother disabled. Two per cent have both the father and the mother disabled. The remaining 18 per cent have at least one child disabled. The main causes of disability in the adults are polio, physical retardation, and deformities from birth.

One of the families interviewed has a 15-year-old boy who is mentally and physically retarded. He had never been to school. Due to understaffing in the St. Paul Branch of Indian Affairs and the shortage of time that restricts staff members from visiting all of the homes, the agency did not know of this boy. When the interviewer brought this situation to the attention of the agency staff, arrangements were made to send the boy to the school for retarded in Edmonton. The possibility of there being more retarded children on the reserve whose conditions are unknown by the Branch is likely for the reasons stated previously.

#### Housing and Clothing

The reserve members are constantly in a position of susceptibility

to illness because of the poor protection they have from the weather. As was indicated earlier, 52 per cent of the families live in log cabins. The overcrowded conditions in most homes make it almost impossible for people in a house to avoid acquiring an illness affecting any other member of the household. In addition, there is paucity of decent winter clothes on the reserve. As will be documented in a later section, the St. Paul Indian Affairs Branch has not been providing clothing allowances for the welfare recipients on the Saddle Lake reserve. Therefore, the families have to use part of their meager food allowances in order to have winter clothes.

The following quotation, from The Indian Affairs Branch - Statement for the Federal-Provincial Conference on Poverty, 1965, will elaborate upon the above:

"The average age of death in 1963 for Indian males was 33.31 years and for Indian females 34.71 years. However, if the deaths occurring in the first 12 months of life are excluded, the average age of death rises in the case of males to over 46 years and to just under 48 years for females. The national average ages of death in 1963 were 60.5 years for males and 64.1 years for females. The fact that Indians appear to die most from causes which are preventable suggests that living conditions and health habits are important factors in the picture. It is perhaps reasonable to assume, though difficult to establish statistically, that many Indians who do not die nevertheless are affected for the same reasons by debilitation and disability which in turn reduces their employability."

#### Eyeglasses

The reserve's children are being affected in a special way by the reserve's poverty. Almost 20 per cent of the school children either wear eyeglasses or have been referred for eyeglasses by the nurses on the reserve and in the schools in the towns. Comparable figures for the non-reserve population were not obtainable but the reserve figures appear to be high.

The reserve's nurse stated that she believed there were two factors which caused the apparently high rate of eyeglasses on the reserve: the children have to read by coal-oil lamps instead of electric lights in the homes; and they have inadequate diets at home. The inadequate lighting will be corrected to some extent because all reserve homes will have electricity in the Fall of 1966. However, the poor diet can only be corrected through higher incomes and an information

program about adequate foods. Only one family on the reserve appeared to be using fresh vegetables with any regularity. The remaining reserve members either do not have any fresh vegetables because their social assistance is inadequate, or they have fresh vegetables very infrequently because their incomes are too meager to allow for much more than the one meat meal per day.

#### Summary

The health and living conditions on the reserve are detrimental to the Indian people in many ways. They shorten the life span of the people, hinder their opportunities for achievement in education, and generally destroy the health of the inhabitants.

While Canada's standard of living is rising rapidly, 52 per cent of the inhabitants of the reserve live in log cabins and 85 per cent of the reserve's people must drink from contaminated water supplies. The Canadian population has a life span of 60 to 65 years while the Indian population has only a 46-year life span (only 33.3 years if we consider the number of Indians who die before reaching one year of age). Thirty-three per cent of the families in our sample have a member who is presently disabled and 30 per cent of the families have had at least one member who has had tuberculosis.



## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

This section will discuss the social organization of the reserve community. The section will include a brief history of the reserve and an analysis of the family and community structures. In addition there will be a discussion of the reserve as a separate municipality.

The section on the family will analyze the types of family structures; their problems; kinship relationships; decision-making and status within the families; and morality. The section on the community will assess the sources of unity and disunity on the reserve.

#### History

The area which is presently called the Saddle Lake Reserve was originally inhabited by Cree Indians around 1860. These Indians were Woodland Cree. The reserve was initially composed of four small family groups. Two large family groups joined the reserve in the late Nineteenth century and early part of the Twentieth century. These two family groups, the Cardinals and the Steinhauers, now comprise about sixty-five to seventy percent of the reserve.

The Cardinals were originally from Saskatchewan. They were involved in a rebellion and the Chief of the White Fish Lake Reserve in Alberta invited the Cardinals to move to the reserve. They eventually migrated down to the reserves in the St. Paul area.

The Steinhauers originated from a minister in the area. In the mid-Nineteenth century a German family in Ontario adopted an Indian boy, Henry Bird, and educated him as their own son. The boy became Henry Steinhauer and in the final phase of his education he was ordained a Protestant minister in England. Steinhauer became minister in White Fish Lake and Saddle Lake Reserves in the mid-Nineteenth century. He married one of the Indian women and they had a large family, mostly boys. From this start, the Steinhauer family grew rapidly.

The Saddle Lake Reserve had approximately 425 members in 1920. By 1950 it had grown to about 950 and in 1966 had approximately 1,550 members.

The area was constituted as a reserve in 1878 with the signing of a Treaty between the Band and the Canadian Government.

#### Family Structure

In Table 1 is found a summary of the various types of family structures on the reserve. The three dimensions which are indicated in the table are age, marital status and the presence of children under twenty-one in the home.

The table illustrates three basic types of families; the complete family - composed of male and female adult and children; the incomplete family - composed of only one adult and children in the household; and the elderly family - composed of one or two aged adults with or without children.

CHAPTER IV TABLE 1

#### TYPES OF FAMILIES IN THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE

<u>Family Types</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total Sample</u>
Single Pensioner, no children	1	1.0
Single Pensioner, children	1	1.0
Pensioners, no children	1	1.0
Pensioners, children	15	14.6
Single, children	2	2.0
Married, no children	2	2.0
Married, children	80	78.4
	102	100%

The complete family is the dominant form on the reserve. Of our sample, seventy-eight point four percent were in this category. Although we had no exact figures, it appears that twenty to thirty percent of the marriages are actually common-law relationships.

The elderly family, as the table indicates, is the second most prevalent family structure. This can be accounted for by the fact that the Indian people have a long history of having "cared for their own". Thus, we find the elderly parents raising their grandchildren as if they were their own. The most prevalent reason for this on the reserve is that the grandchildren were born out of wedlock to daughters of the couple. Another reason is the breaking-up of their child's marriage - either by a death or by separation or divorce - in which case, the elderly couple again takes in the grandchildren.

There are a few single people with children who have their own households - only two percent in our sample. The unwed mother or widow with children is usually taken in by her parents and cared for as part of their household.

The interviewers found no instances where a single man or woman was living in a household separate from their parents. In all cases, where single men or women did not live with parents, they were living in a separate house and, probably because of the total unavailability of birth-control information on the reserve, they had children.

Common-law marriages seem to be diminishing on the reserve in recent years. Quite possibly it is due to the increased influence of the Church, and the standards that are being adopted from closer association with the non-reserve world. Though common-law marriages are not openly condemned by the reserve members, neither are they condoned. They appear to be accepted as a fact of life. These relationships were an integral part of the past history of Indian society and this tradition may account for their persistence.

#### Kinship Relations and Geographical Proximity

The reserve is divided into two somewhat distinct sections. The dividing line runs east and west through the center of the reserve, where the health clinic and Catholic church are located. The Indian Affairs Branch office used to be there also before it was moved to St. Paul. To the north of the dividing line are the majority of the Steinhauer clan and to the south are the Cardinal families.

The Indian people have had a tradition of "sharing". This tradition was previously the main cause of the Indian's inability to establish himself off the reserve. Whenever an Indian person would move to the city and get a job, his family would move in with him and this would lead to his realization of the greater gains to be had by living on the reserve. The presence of the extended family eliminated any possible economic gains that one acquired in the city while the man still had to undergo the rigors of city life. Today this situation seems to be disappearing. Most of the reserve members have relatives living in the city yet they continue to

remain on the reserve. Possibly the advent of social assistance for the reserves has eliminated the need for relying so extensively on family members for help.

#### Role Definition

Within the Indian families, the female appears to still be subservient to the male. In almost all of the homes the interviewers found the wife serving the meals to the husband and other males - even males from neighbouring households - and not eating with the others unless there was an extra place provided for her. The role of the female as housekeeper - including hauling water from the well or streams - was clearly defined.

The role of the male, however, is drastically changing. In the past the man was the provider. He hunted or farmed to provide food and clothing for the family. The male children would go with the father and thus, learn their roles and occupations. Most of the reserve's males are unemployed. Today's reserve male is not viewed as the provider in the family. One of the reserve members, a twenty-nine year old father of six who finally found yearly employment, stated the situation quite eloquently. He said, "When I used to go into town to buy groceries, my children would tell me to buy them one thing or another. They knew that I was not working for the money we received, so I had to buy them everything." This is the plight of the Indian father on relief. It corresponds very closely with the mother dominated households in Harlem. There, only the woman can find jobs. The children lose respect for the father and go out into the streets in search of masculine images to relate to. Too often it becomes the image of the thief or gangster. What solutions Indian children will find for their identity problems remains to be seen.

#### Common-Law Marriages and Children

The frequency of common-law marriages on the reserve, and their tradition-rooted basis were mentioned before. One of the more serious problems occurs when a common-law marriage breaks up and the woman goes to live with another man. The interviewers found a few instances where the woman had entered into her second or third common-law marriage and the new husband refused to allow her to bring the children of the previous marriages into the new household. The woman's desire for the new relation-

ship forced her to place the children in the homes of the grandparents or some other relatives. This total disruption of the family, and the potential psychological injury to the children, are apparent enough that elaboration is not necessary.

#### Problems Within the Family Structure

The common problem within all family types is inadequate income. As will be discussed in the section on the reserve's economy, the majority of the people are on social assistance and the payments they receive are inadequate.

One of the families that the author interviewed was an eighty-two year old couple, both receiving old age pensions. They have a fifteen year old adopted daughter. All three have a one room log cabin as their home but the cabin is so poor that they all live in a tent behind the cabin and use the cabin only for cooking. The pensioners do not receive any money from the Indian Affairs Branch for the girl's welfare because she is not a Treaty Indian and they had no knowledge of the fact that they could receive money from the provincial government.

The family's circumstances point up two prevalent problems. First, when some of the older people take in their grandchildren - though they don't adopt them - they are often not given additional funds to care for these children. Thus, the meagre pensions or social assistance payments are spread thinner than the human needs. This occasional reluctance by the Indian Affairs Branch seems to stem from our belief that families should care for their own. However, when these old people have to be cared for by the government themselves, clearly they will be unable to care for the children they are raising without receiving additional income. This points up a great void in the Welfare administration - the lack of follow-ups on child placements or even a decent assessment of homes before child placement is undertaken. Approximately twenty-five percent of the reserve homes contain children who are not actual members of the family. Only by the greatest stretching of the standards could the majority of these homes be considered qualified for child-placement.

The shortage of staff at the Indian Affairs Branch appears to be the obvious explanation for this inadequacy. However, the fact that the three

interviewers all felt the majority of the Indian Affairs Branch, St. Paul staff was somewhat biased against Indians could be an explanation for the lack of concern by the Indian Affairs Branch.

Adding to the problem of inadequate funds is the large number of people per family. The average family has over seven members, with four being of school age. An obvious need here is a program to supply birth control information to the reserve's families. The following incident is typical of stories related by members of the Indian Affairs Branch. One of the female interviewers was interviewing a young couple (male, thirty-three, female, thirty-one) who had ten children and had lost three additional ones at childbirth. The woman said she wanted to stop having children, but did not know how to do it. She said that if she had one more child, she would probably die. The interviewer advised her to see a doctor and explain the problem to him. It was obvious that the woman and almost all of the women on the reserve did not know that they could get free birth control supplies at the Camsell Hospital. There were three women who, when interviewed, stated that they were using birth control methods. Two of these three women were Catholic. All three had small families and were not among the permanent or temporary welfare recipients. The nurses at the reserve clinic, despite their own opposition to birth control, have been willing to advise women to see doctors when the women asked about methods of birth control. However, the nurses have not initiated any references, though the need was obvious for many families. It seems necessary to either require the nurses to initiate references or to set up a program to disseminate birth control information on the reserve.

#### The Community

This section will deal with the sources of unity and disunity within the reserve community. All of the assessments in this discussion are derived from the observations of the interviewers and their discussions with reserve members.

Many aspects of reserve life - such as religion and recreational activities - can be considered both as a source of unity and of disunity. Therefore, they will be discussed with regard to their relevance to each.

#### Sources of Unity: Religion - The two churches on the reserve are

the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church. At present, the Roman Catholics appear to comprise a slight majority of the reserve members.

Aside from the obvious unity that a religion brings to like-minded people, the Roman Catholic Church provides leadership for the reserve members in a very different way. Its priest, Father Gagnon, has been instrumental in organizing or participating in many of the newer programs which will eventually help the reserve. He helped to organize an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter on the reserve.

The United Church does not have a full-time minister on the reserve. During the winter a lay-minister in the area preaches at the reserve church every Sunday and during the summer a theology student has charge of the parish. For the last four years these students have come from Queen's University. The student ministers have set up evening programs during the week: children's night, Monday; teen-agers', Tuesday; family night on Wednesday, etc. Usually folk-singing, Bible reading and sports and Red Cross instruction is offered at these meetings. Unfortunately, there is nothing of this sort when the student minister returns to school in the fall.

Sources of Unity: Recreational Activities - The only apparent organized community recreational activities, aside from the United Church's summer evening programs, are the reserve's baseball team and the Treaty time celebrations.

The baseball team appears to be a focus of community pride and attention. The team gains this pride and attention from the fact that it is competing with white teams and other Indian reserves on an equal basis. Many of the reserve members travel to the games when the team plays on other reserves or in nearby towns. The desire to win is great and is a response to the opportunity to demonstrate their ability under equal conditions.

The celebration held each summer at "Treaty Time" is an important aspect of reserve life. It is both a period of celebration and a reaffirmation of the fact that the people are Indian. During Treaty days all of the registered Band members receive a five dollar cheque from the federal government. This five dollars per capita payment appears to be one reason

why many of the people left their jobs in the sugar beet fields to travel 450 miles back to the reserve - a family of ten would get a fifty dollar cheque. The money, of course, is not the main reason for returning because it would be economically unwise to quit work for so small a sum - in addition the cheque could be picked up any time at the Indian Affairs Branch office. The main attraction is the week long festivities. There are baseball games, horse races, a rodeo, and dances every night. The festivities have always attracted whites to the reserve. Usually the reserve members set up their tents by the rodeo grounds for the whole week. They often dress in costume and play old Indian games. This year the Treaty days festivities were strangely different. The rodeo was scheduled for two weeks after the festivities were concluded. The music at the dances was all rock and roll. The older reserve members just sat along the walls watching the young people dance. This was not a community dance in any sense of the word. Why these things happened is not known. It does seem, however, that the Treaty days celebration is in the process of very rapid change, and may be losing the unifying significance it has had in the past.

Another activity which enjoyed wide community participation was the Adult Education classes on the reserve. As the Chief stated, the classes had a larger turnout than did the Band meetings. The Adult Education program consisted of trade school courses and seminars with speakers from various parts of Alberta. The speakers - the Mayor and Fire Chief of St. Paul, an Insurance man from Edmonton, a member of the Indian Affairs Branch, etc. - tried to discuss the problems and realities of the non-reserve world and to stimulate discussion about the reserve and its problems. All of the people in the interview sample who attended these meetings were quite enthusiastic about them and hoped they would continue in future years. Continuation of this program, as will be explained in a later section on Education, does not appear likely. The people who attended the course-work part of the program also seemed enthusiastic. As one forty-four year old man stated, "I went to the mathematics class and it made me think again. It sort of opened up my brain and now I'm reading newspapers and magazines again." The course-work part of the program will continue on the reserve.

A final program that is getting community-wide attention is the Alcoholics Anonymous chapter which was started on the reserve in January of 1966 by Father Gagnon, the reserve priest. The chapter now has seven permanent members and their wives attending every weekly meeting. The seven families, all living in different sections of the reserve, appear to have been united in a close friendship, through this common experience. They also appear to be diminishing their relationships with reserve members who continue to drink.

The reserve has a high rate of heavy drinkers - though not necessarily alcoholics. Since most families have no source of income but social assistance, drinking often causes a heavy drain on the food resources for the wives and children. In response to a question on the interview schedule, the main opposition to allowing Indians to drink in the bars and on the reserve mentioned by respondents was the feeling that drinking by the parents deprives the children of food and clothing.

All the reserve members are watching the progress of the seven Alcoholics Anonymous members very closely and admiringly. During the course of the interviewing the people would all complain about the ineffective leadership of the Band Council and would state that they will elect a totally new council at the elections in November. When the interviewers would ask who they planned to elect the reserve members would inevitably mention at least one of the seven AA members. Their reasoning was simply that the man or men had stopped drinking and thus, could be trusted to do a good job.

The Indian people seem willing to follow the example and leadership of their own people. The above illustration serves to illustrate this. But it appears that the people want perfection in their exemplars. The two reserve girls who attend the Jasper Place Composite High School related the following to one of the interviewers. When they came back to the reserve for Treaty time everyone criticized them whenever they were out late on dates, had a drink with one of the other reserve people or just acted like the other young people on the reserve. The reserve members expected the two girls in Grade 12 to have been different. The people seemed to be saying to themselves, "why should our children struggle to get through high school if they do not change, if they do not become adults?"

Though the reserve members appear willing to follow exemplars, they have not followed the lead of the three successful large-scale farmers off the reserve. Many said that it was impossible to get the financial start that would permit them to be successful farmers also. This, as will be discussed in the section on Economics, is basically true whether the people made the effort or not.

#### Summary: Sources of Unity

The main sources of unity on the reserve are religion, sports, Treaty Time celebrations, and the Indian Affairs Branch's Adult Education classes.

The "religious unity" means more than each individual religious group feeling a sense of unity. The transcending unity is created by the reserve's priest and the efforts he has made for a reserve-wide program for rehabilitation of alcoholics.

The reserve's baseball team, which is the only organized sports endeavour on the reserve, commands community-wide attention, but this is only for about two months of the year. The rest of the year the people have no similar focus for their attention.

The Treaty Time celebration, though still commanding widespread participation and interest, is changing its "meaning" to the reserve and is becoming less of a focus for the reserve members' identification as Indians.

The Adult Education classes appear to produce the widest participation on the reserve. In addition, the classes continue for the greater part of the year, thus allowing almost continual participation.

The sources of unity on the reserve are few, and these sources need to be supplemented - possibly by more sports and recreational facilities, and more community projects - to help maintain and increase the people's identification both as Indians and as a community.

Sources of Disunity: Religion - The geographical division of the reserve into north and south is also basically the religious division of the reserve - the Roman Catholics live in the south and the United Church members live in the north. The lack of transportation and continual

recreation activities on the reserve necessitates the close association only with neighbours - people of the same religion.

The lack of real progress on the reserve, the increasing numbers on the welfare rolls, and the apparent lack of leadership by the Band Council has fostered a religious split on the reserve. Some of the Catholics blame all of the reserve's hardships on the Protestants. One of the more vocal Catholics told the interviewers, "The Protestants run the reserve and the whole country and they are doing a lousy job. The Catholics are going to vote in a bloc (in the November election on the reserve) and elect all Catholics. We are going to run the place now." This feeling of antagonism was expressed in lesser tones by other Catholics.

The Protestants have similar fears. Many stated that they believe the reserve priest is trying to take over the reserve for himself by urging the Catholic members to take control of the reserve. Some of the Protestants cited stories of priests taking over other reserves and then selling reserve land to whites. These stories were checked out by the interviewers and found to be incorrect. Nevertheless, some people believe these stories and their fears motivate their antagonism, thus, the religious split on the reserve. The fact that there is no full-time Protestant minister on the reserve prevents cooperation between church leaders which is badly needed.

The Protestants' mistrust of the priest hinders the success of many of the programs on the reserve. For instance, the Community Development Committee's meetings are held in the church basement and all four of the committee members are Catholic. The location in the church, the committee's religious composition and most especially the priest's attendance at the meetings, leads the Protestants to fear the program's intentions.

The priest's initiative in founding the reserve's Alcoholics Anonymous chapter and his participation in its meetings has surprisingly not detracted from the interest shown in this group by the Protestants. Possibly it is because they view the program as aimed at helping individuals and not threatening a takeover of the reserve.

Sources of Disunity: Recreational Activities - Aside from the recreational activities during the summer - the baseball team, Treaty Time, the United Church's evening programs - the reserve has no regularly scheduled recreational activities during the winter. There are no reserve dances, movies or meeting places. The reserve has a Band Hall which is used only for dances at Treaty Time and for the periodic Band meetings.

The reserve's lack of recreational activities requires that the people go into the nearby towns. Most go to the bars and the movies while some also play bingo. There are no organized - or unorganized - sports activities in the winter - no football, hockey or basketball tournaments for the reserve children to participate in. Thus, many of the children fourteen and fifteen start drinking for lack of alternative interests. They get the liquor from white "bootleggers" in the towns or from other reserve members. The high incidence of unwed mothers in their middle and late 'teens can also be traced - partially - to the dearth of organized recreational activities on the reserve.

#### Summary: Sources of Disunity

The sources of disunity on the reserve are few but potentially destructive to any growth potential for the reserve.

The religious split, increased by no full-time Protestant minister on the reserve, has produced a mutual distrust of any program proposed for the whole reserve by members of either religious group. The obvious group to transcend this distrust - because it contains members of both religious groups - is the Band Council. However, the council has many limitations which prevent it from providing the leadership - and thus, the unity - that the reserve requires.

The lack of recreational facilities on the reserve requires that the people go into the towns for recreation. This activity detracts from the "community" conception of the reserve which appears vital for unity amongst the people.

#### The Reserve as a Municipality

and Band Council. These elected officials, who serve for three year terms, make the laws on the reserve; set the speed limits; decide upon the claims of one reserve member against another; and negotiate contracts with whites for leases of reserve lands for farming, pasture land, and oil-drilling rights.

The reserve has its own finances. These monies, which are derived from leasing or selling land and from oil royalties, are used by the reserve Band Council to buy necessary implements for the reserve or to make loans or grants for needy reserve members. The Band Council, for many reasons which will be discussed in later sections, does not tax the reserve members, but it does have this power.

The reserve has its own school system. Historically, the reserve schools have provided the only education offered to most Indian children. These schools, which are run by various religious groups, are being phased out by the Indian Affairs Branch, but the Saddle Lake Reserve still has a day school for Grades 1 and 2.

The reserve cares for its own roads. Recently it bought a new grader for \$33,000 to take care of the roads on the reserve. In addition, the grader can be rented out to reserve members for \$3.00 per hour if people need help in clearing a roadway or a plot for a garden.

Finally, the reserve hires one of its own members as a policeman. This man is authorized to perform the usual duties of a town police force on the reserve. In practice, the conduct of the reserve affairs is somewhat less than ideal. The Band Council is composed of untrained, poorly educated men who appear to have little conception of what their responsibilities as representatives of the people mean. There is only one man on the council who is capable of dealing with the varied topics and problems which the Band Council faces at each monthly meeting. Consequently, the Indian Affairs Branch staff member who attends the council meetings has great influence in determining the outcome of the most important problems. The council member mentioned above has a larger part in determining decisions because, as the interviewers observed when they attended the June council meeting, almost all of the council members follow the lead of this man when it comes to voting.

The council members' apparent lack of concern with the meetings was demonstrated to the interviewers at the June meeting. One of the council members slept throughout the greater part of the eight hour session. He was occasionally awakened by one of the interviewers but immediately returned to his slumber. This, we were told, was rather commonplace at all of the meetings. The majority of the councillors appear more concerned with receiving the \$10.00 payment for each monthly meeting than with participating for the reserve's benefit.

The council meetings for the Saddle Lake Reserve are held in the Indian Affairs Branch, St. Paul office rather than on the reserve. The council members echo the Indian Affairs Branch staff in justifying this procedure. They state that the papers and records from the reserve are in the St. Paul office and are usually needed at the meetings. This "justification" seemed to be a mere excuse because Indian Bands do hold their meetings on the reserve. They simply set up an agenda beforehand and bring all the relevant files to the reserve. One of the councillors stated that they had previously held a few meetings on the reserve but "there were so many people there that we could not accomplish anything". It was suggested by one of the interviewers that possibly the fact that many people turned out for Band meetings indicated that many people were interested or had complaints but could not find transportation for the fifteen mile trip to St. Paul. This comment received no reply from the councillor. From conversation with the reserve members it seems apparent that the above comment is true. Because of lack of transportation, many people would have to hire someone to drive them into St. Paul for the meetings and this would only be undertaken if an important personal matter was at stake.

The Band's election process is rather dissimilar from the Canadian process. On the reserve there is no actual campaigning. Men are nominated for the eight councillor positions. These men then go to their friends and, apparently, tell them what the council did in the past three years - always implying that the council member who is speaking was an integral part of the reason for these accomplishments. The people of course have no way of knowing how effective each member was because nobody observes the meetings. Also the candidates appear to promise their friends and relatives access to welfare houses and the other benefits

available from the Indian Affairs Branch.

Nepotism, it appears, is widespread on the reserve. All but three of the councillors have welfare houses - the Chief refusing to take one - and another councillor constructing his own. One of the councillors, having only a wife and two children, received a house even though he was obviously not entitled to a welfare house under the criteria established for dispensing the houses. Some of the councillors' relatives were also obviously not entitled to houses or wells. One case in particular; a brother of one of the councillors has only two children yet received a house; he also recently was given a second well though many of the families do not even have one well. This whole situation, of course, produces friction on the reserve and results in bloc voting by families to insure that they receive as many benefits as possible.

The whole system of campaigning on issues seems alien to the reserve. The St. Paul Indian Affairs Branch is planning to have a mock election shortly before the November election. The high school students will hold an election on the reserve and will campaign on issues relating to the reserve. The Indian Affairs Branch hopes that this will teach the adults to do likewise.

A municipality would normally have its own schools but, though the reserves do have schools located on them, these are being phased out by the Indian Affairs Branch. At present, only Grade 1 and 2 classes remain. The vast majority of the reserve children attend schools in the neighbouring towns, yet the parents cannot participate on the School Boards because they are not officially members of the school districts. Their children are allowed to attend the non-reserve schools only because of the provincial-federal agreements to that effect. Thus, the reserve parents have no voice in deciding upon the education of their children.

Though the reserve has its own finances it cannot spend its money as it wishes. The reserve's money is held in the Indian Affairs Branch office in Ottawa - with the federal government paying five percent interest on the money. All payments made by the Band Council must be requested from Ottawa - thus taking three weeks - and Ottawa has the right to refuse to appropriate the money if it so desires. In addition,

the Band Council cannot distribute more than fifty percent of the capital monies - money received from the sale of land - for per capita division to Band members. Thus the reserve's money can only be used with Indian Affairs Branch approval.

The reserves relate to provincial programs only to the extent that the distribution of social assistance by the federal government is decentralized - as of April 1, 1965 - and the Indian Affairs Branch in each province pays according to its provincial scale. All of the other programs in the province are not applicable to the reserves. The reserves must rely on federal government's programs which have the same rates for all provinces.

Finally, the Band Council hires one of the reserve members to serve as a policeman. He is paid \$300 per month from the Band funds - from this he must buy his own uniform, use his own car, pay for the gas and all repairs - but is under the supervision and jurisdiction of the St. Paul police force. He must report all incidents to the St. Paul police and turn over all fines he collects to them. Thus the reserve cannot get a monetary return from his work though it does hire him, pay his wages and fire him.

From the above it seems apparent that, though the reserve is treated as a separate municipality, it is in no way correct to assume that it functions as one. The major limitations on its exercise of municipal authority are as follows:

- 1) Because the reserve members are uneducated as to their rights and responsibilities in the reserve's elective system of government.
- 2) The Band Councillors are untrained and have little conception of their role as "representatives of the people".
- 3) The parents cannot participate on the local School Boards and therefore, they do not have a voice in their children's education.
- 4) Their right to help decide their children's education is further diminished by the fact that the Indian Affairs Branch is phasing out reserve schools and eliminating the parents' choice of whether they want the children to go to provincial schools or reserve schools.

- 5) The Indian Affairs Branch often sets up programs (and recently a five year plan) for the reserve without consulting the Band or Council members.
- 6) The reserve's money is held by the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa and the Branch has restrictions as to what the money can be spent for.

In effect, the reserve is not a municipality within the province but a wardship of the federal government.



## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMY OF THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE

This chapter presents a description of the economy of the Saddle Lake Reserve, a description which is subject, of course, to limitations of the information available to us from interview materials and records of the Indian Affairs Branch. The chapter is organized under six main headings:

- (1) the economic history of the reserve; (2) current earned income, including both farm income and wage employment; (3) current transfer payments, including social assistance, social allowance, and old age and disability pensions;
- (4) the total incomes of sample members; (5) current programs for the reserve; and (6) future prospects for the reserve. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information presented.

It is a melancholy fact that virtually all of the information available points to the very great waste of physical and human resources which the Saddle Lake Reserve represents.

#### The Economic History of the Reserve

Our information about the economic history of the reserve was obtained through discussions with three senior members of the reserve - men who were 72, 75, and 84 years of age respectively. From their accounts it seems that the Saddle Lake Reserve had very little money in its Band funds in the early 1900's. In 1921 the reserve sold forty-five square miles of its easternmost land (the nine miles from St. Brides to St. Paul) for \$22,000 and this land is now part of the St. Paul township. During the early 1900's, and until the Great Depression of 1929, the reserve members were self-sufficient small farmers. With the Depression came the need for many of the families to sell their teams and equipment in order to survive. In the mid-30's the Indian Affairs Branch's agency assistant, a Mr. Boris, started programs to help the reserve members purchase new teams to return to farming. Unfortunately the three informants did not recall the details of the program. Part of the problem of their failing memories may lie in the fact that Boris is now almost legendary to the reserve members. Boris remained on the reserve until 1947 and the informants claim that at this time everyone was again self-sufficient. In 1947, he was transferred by the Indian Affairs Branch to another reserve and from that point on the reserve's economy declined, the informants maintained. As the three men described it, the reserve members had nobody to

encourage them to remain as farmers and nobody to advise them of the difficulties in store for them if they again sold their teams and equipment. In time the people again began to sell off teams and equipment, as needs for cash arose. When they wanted to buy back their equipment later, they found that they could not afford to. Thus, during the 1953-54 period, many of the previously self-sufficient farmers of the reserve turned to social assistance as their alternative.

#### Current Earned Income

There are two main sources of earned income available to Indians on the Saddle Lake Reserve, that derived from farm land and that derived from wage employment. We shall consider each in turn.

Farm Income - In this section we shall present information on the economic potential of the farming land on the reserve, the current actual use of the farm land, and the programs for increasing the use of the land.

The Saddle Lake Reserve consists of 63,000 acres which includes some of the best farming land in Alberta. Yet only 6,000 acres are currently being used systematically for agricultural purposes. Of this area, 4,000 acres are being farmed by members of the reserve and 2,000 acres are being farmed by whites who work it under six year crop-sharing leases from the reserve. According to our survey, there are two, and only two reserve families who farm on a fairly large scale. Two additional families farm sufficiently actively for farming to provide an appreciable income.

In contradiction to these figures, it should be noted that twenty-seven percent of the physically able men on the reserve described their occupational classification as either "farmer" or "cattleman". The explanation for this seeming contradiction is three-fold. First, almost every household on the reserve was operating a more or less self-sufficient farm in the late 1930's and 1940's. Accordingly, though they are not actively farming now they still consider themselves farmers. Second, most people wanted to claim a plausible-sounding occupation, though most were in fact unemployed. Since they were living on farms, howbeit non-functioning farms, the identification as farmer came naturally. Finally, in answer to the question, "What work would you prefer to do more than any other?" more than three-fourths of the respondents (seventy-nine percent) mentioned farming or cattle raising as their first choice.

How does it happen that there is such a dramatic, not to say scandalous contrast between the involvement of reserve members in farming twenty or more years ago, and the present? The answer to this question lies in the consequences of the Depression, and the contrast between typical farming operations then and now, according to the information we were able to discover. According to informants the farming that was typical of reserve families in the past was a one-horse or two-horse operation, literally. The plow drawn by the team was a simple one, and other machinery used was comparably simple and inexpensive. Farming was on a very small scale, little more than subsistence farming in most cases. But it was sufficient to provide a livelihood to most of the families on the reserve and the feelings of independence and self-respect which accompany self-support. Everywhere on the Saddle Lake Reserve one may now see the substantially overgrown fields which give mute testimony to this extensive cultivation of the land in an earlier day.

What was it that brought this period of reserve-wide subsistence farming to an end? As we have seen, according to informants, there were two influences involved. The primary one was the disastrous crash of farm produce prices in the early years of the Depression, which deprived the farmers on the reserve of the little cash income necessary to their way of life. As the Depression dragged on, and as needs for cash became more pressing, farmers on the reserve sold their simple farming machinery for the needed cash. The second was that this earlier experience of selling equipment for cash established something of a precedent which people fell back on during the 1950's when they needed cash, once the influence of Boris died away. The increased availability of welfare programs made it possible to do this without incurring severe privation. But when this was done, farming in the old way was over: people did not have equipment with which to work the land.

Other reasons must be mentioned to account for the continuing rarity of active farming on the reserve. Perhaps the basic one is that the ethic of disciplined work, of farm entrepreneurship, and of self-support in the context of the white man's way of life was not strong enough. We suspect that it did not fully recover from the shock of the Depression, and more from continuing apathetic acquiescence to getting by in the same dependency ways that they got by during the Depression years. But there were other equally important reasons. By the end of the Depression, farming had been revolution-

ized to the point where it took a heavy capital outlay to obtain the machinery which was needed for successful farming. Indians had neither the training, nor the credit resources and the sophistication to farm on this scale. Yet this was the scale which the Indian Affairs Branch appeared to encourage. It did have a program to help one or two of the most outstanding young men on the reserve get into farming on this scale by making the needed credit, advisement and training available to them. The theory was that these men would be "pace setters" who would serve as models for the emulation of others. What apparently happened in fact was that others learned from these examples that there was no point in trying to begin farming again if one did not have the resources of the Indian Affairs Branch behind him.

Yet another obstacle, of course, was that as the old fields became more and more overgrown there was a steady increase in the amount of work that had to be done before a crop could be planted.

In contrast to this set of obstacles there was one significant new resource. The Band Council did purchase a tractor and some other basic farming equipment to be borrowed by tribal members. However, in the course of interviewing we encountered general disinterest in the use of this Band equipment. People said that if they did borrow it to plant a crop, when the time came to harvest that crop they would find that others were using the equipment when they wanted it. It seems clear that this is "only an excuse"; what it does perhaps reflect is a general attitude that if one cannot be a big farmer, who owns all of his own equipment, one does not want to farm at all. There is reason to believe that the Indian Affairs Branch may be in part responsible for the spread of this attitude.

On the Saddle Lake Reserve, income from leasing land to white farmers is received, directly or indirectly, by more people than are actively engaged in farming, although not by very many more. Members of the reserve, although they individually do not own any land, may get a "certificate of possession" from the reserve Band Council. This is a non-negotiable deed which entitles the recipient to use the land for any purpose. Everyone who farmed in the 1920's and 1930's was allocated specific areas on the reserve, and retained "title" even after he had stopped farming his areas. Four families now lease their land to white farmers on a crop-sharing basis. The leases are for six years and the white farmer, under the scrutinization of the Indian Affairs Branch, pays the reserve member one third of the crop yield. One family in

our sample received an income of \$80 per month from this source.

The Band Council also leases community pasture land to non-reserve members for \$9.00 per cow per year. The council, which negotiates all land leases, appears to be limiting the amount of pasture land leased because it favours the more profitable crop-sharing leases. Three of the councillors stated that the council anticipates signing more crop-sharing leases in the near future.

The following quotation from an ARDA study on the economy of Indian reserves in Saskatchewan is currently relevant in Alberta as well:<sup>1</sup>

"The fact that many Indians are leasing their land, rather than farming it, is commonly taken as evidence that Indians do not wish to farm. Instead, let us consider the alternatives. If he leases, the Indian may expect a return of \$500 to \$800 on a quarter section.... When comparison is made with net farm income on small holdings (most of which run to more than a quarter section) it can be seen that the return from renting may frequently be higher. This makes leasing merely a rational choice in the circumstances - a situation in which men are not equipped to produce a reasonable return from farming."

Wage Employment - In this section we shall discuss the occupational distribution of wage earners, full-time employment, migratory part-time employment, and the earnings from employment of the sample members.

In each of the one hundred and two households which were interviewed, we asked what was the regular occupation of the male breadwinner. Considering only those cases where there were physically able men in the household, in a majority of cases (fifty-four percent), the answer was "labourer". We have noted above that another twenty-seven percent described themselves as "farmers" or "cattlemen". Nineteen percent were in some semi-skilled or skilled occupational category.

That only eight of the one hundred and eighty families on the Saddle Lake Reserve obtained significant income from agricultural sources would seem to imply a heavy dependence, by these families, on wage employment. We shall see that this is not true however. The wage employment opportunities available to members of the Saddle Lake Reserve are almost as meagre as are the opportunities for farming on an adequate scale.

The interview data suggests that the breadwinners in twenty-two percent of the households on the reserve should be considered incapable of working. These households include pensioners, permanently disabled men, and households

with no husbands present. The remaining seventy-eight percent must be considered capable of self-support if the heads of these households are able to find employment. How many of these households were in fact self-supporting? Twenty-three men in the sample, (twenty-three percent of the total), worked at least nine months of the year 1965. The following is a list of the jobs which they held:

- 1 - working for a farmer off the reserve
- 2 - driving school bus or working as a janitor in the school
- 2 - road grader operators in Hinton and Edson
- 4 - farming on the reserve (includes the farmers described above)
- 6 - working in a chemical plant in a nearby town.
- 8 - labourers, carpenters, plasterers, apprentice electrician, odd jobs, etc.

These men represent twenty-three of the seventy-nine households which should be self-supporting which were contacted during the interviewing on the reserve. Thus, in about seventy percent of the labour force households in the sample, no member of the household was employed for as long as nine months out of the year.

The reasons for this shocking picture of unemployment are, of course, the decline in farming on the reserve, the absence of wage employment on the reserve, and the scarcity of employment in the vicinity of the reserve. We have already discussed the first reason. It must be pointed out in regard to the second that there is no industry on the reserve at all, and more, there is not a single commercial venture - all purchases have to be made off the reserve. The only exception to this generalization is a candy and tobacco "business" which the Roman Catholic priest runs as a service out of a closet in his office. In regard to employment in the area surrounding the reserve, it should be noted <sup>(1)</sup> six reserve members have found work in a nearby chemical plant, but <sup>(2)</sup> such employment opportunities are extremely limited (chemical plants today are so automated that they require very small work forces) and <sup>(3)</sup> there is evidence of prejudice on the part of neighbouring whites in hiring Indians.

Wage Employment (Part-Time) - Where the full-time employment (i.e. employment for at least nine months of the year) is so scarce it is to be expected that a sizable portion of the work force would be engaged in seasonal and perhaps migratory employment. A major source of such employment is available in

the sugar beet fields, in the area around Lethbridge in the southern part of the province, every year from about the first week in May until the first week in July. Two interviewers spent a week in this area interviewing workers from the Saddle Lake Reserve during the last week in June, in 1966, while this study was in progress. They found that the Saddle Lake workers had become very widely scattered by this late in the season. As a result they were only able to interview twenty-seven workers, but valuable information was obtained from them.

The Indian Affairs Branch has the policy of stopping welfare payments, during the summer, for all reserve members but those on permanent welfare. The result of this policy is that reserve members must leave the reserve during the summer to find work. We asked reserve members who were working in the sugar beet fields in southern Alberta concerning the summer work opportunities available to them. Eighty-five percent of the beet workers interviewed reported that they had tried to find work near the reserve but that none was available. These same men all said that they would prefer to work on or near the reserve. We noted earlier in this section, that there are almost no jobs in the area surrounding the reserve, either in the winter or in the summer. The majority of the people have no alternative in the summer but to travel to where there are jobs available, making use of the skills or lack of skills they can offer.

The migration to Lethbridge has almost become a tradition with the people of the Saddle Lake Reserve. Forty-five percent of those interviewed had been to Lethbridge at least six times previously while only thirteen point seven percent had been there but once before or were there for the first time. The National Employment Service in Lethbridge reported that, according to registrations in the National Employment Service by beet workers, there were approximately 2,000 Indians from Alberta and 2,000 Indians from Saskatchewan working in the beet fields around Lethbridge.

The amount of money earned by the migrants for the two to three months work is attractive to them because it is much more than they could get on welfare. Only thirty-three point three percent of the families earn less than \$400 for their summer work. In fact, twelve point five percent of the families earn between \$1,300 and \$1,900. When asked why they care to work in the Lethbridge area rather than migrating somewhere else, sixty-three percent

replied that they could "make good money" in Lethbridge.

Though the people receive more money than they would on welfare, very little is saved by the time they return to the reserve. Seventy-four percent of the respondents said they managed to save one quarter or less of their earnings. The main reason given for the inability to save more was the high cost of food in Lethbridge. The other reasons given included alcohol, purchasing used cars, and police fines.

The interviewers received complaints by three Indian families of the poor treatment they received from one of the farmers. They had been 'contracted' to hoe sugar beets for the farmer. After the families completed the first hoeing (the hardest hoeing) the farmer refused to let them do the easier second and third hoeings - claiming they did a poor job on the first - and deducted \$3.00 an acre from their wages. Many of the Indians in Lethbridge claimed that they were involved in similar incidents, but had no place to which to turn for aid. The Indians claim that the farmers do this second and third hoeing themselves because they are easy. Under a 'contract' there is the understanding that a man who does the first hoeing will also be allowed to do the second and third. Yet the Indian workers find themselves without recourse when they are fired and money is deducted from their wages.

The living conditions for most migratory workers were quite inadequate. Almost all of the buildings which they live in, which are provided by the farmers who employ them, were shacks, converted granaries, and chicken coops. Many had only dirt flooring and none that the interviewers observed had plumbing facilities or easy access to a water supply. None had facilities in which to keep meats and dairy products. Consequently the migratory families had to live on canned foods for the two to three months that they worked in the beet fields.

Total Earnings From Employment - The result of this picture of very limited employment opportunities is, of course, extremely meagre earnings by the reserve members. In Table 1 is found the tabulation of household earnings for sample members for whom data are available. The data in the table show that the largest single income group, which included twenty-three percent, earned some income amounting to less than \$500 during 1965. One half of the sample members for whom data are available earned less than \$1,000 , and only nine percent earned as much as \$5,000. Nineteen percent earned over \$3,000.

Eight percent earned no income.

CHAPTER V TABLE 1

INCOME EARNED DURING 1965 BY HOUSEHOLDS IN SAMPLE

	No.	%
NONE	6	7.6
UNDER \$500.	18	22.8
\$ 500. - \$ 999.	15	19.0
\$1,000. - \$1,999.	16	20.3
\$2,000. - \$2,999.	9	11.4
\$3,000. - \$4,999.	8	10.1
OVER \$5,000.	<u>7</u>	<u>8.9</u>
TOTAL	79	100.0

Transfer Payments

It is clear from information presented thus far that neither the farming nor the employment sources of income of the sample members are sufficient to provide even minimally for the subsistence needs of the Saddle Lake Reserve members. The result of course is that there must be heavy subsidy of families through a variety of transfer payments. In this section we shall describe first, the kinds and amounts of transfer payments to members of the sample interviewed. Second, we shall briefly describe the administration of welfare programs by the Indian Affairs Branch at the St. Paul office. Third, we shall present some information on the attitudes of subjects interviewed toward transfer payments.

Amounts of Transfer Payments - There are four main types of transfer payments which may be received by Indians in common with other Albertans: Social Assistance payments made to those with relatively temporary welfare needs, disability pensions, and old age pensions.

In Table 2, are found the amounts of Social Assistance, Social Allowance (including family allowance), Old Age Pension, and Disability Pension received by sample members during 1965. The data show that the source from which the largest proportion of sample members receive transfer payments is Social Allowance, because family allowance is included in this category. However, by far the largest sums are received from Social Assistance. Slightly more than two-thirds of the sample members for whom data on amounts received

were available received more than \$500 a year. More strikingly, Table 3 shows that more than seventy-five percent of the households in the sample received Social Assistance for more than three months out of the year. About one-quarter of the sample received Social Assistance more than nine months out of the year, and in terms of income about one-third received more than \$1,000. during 1965. Because of the high proportion of elderly people in households in the sample, about twenty percent received Old Age Pensions. Only three percent of the households received disability pensions, however. Our figures show that almost as much of the income of the sample members comes from transfer payments as from earnings. The total figure for the former, for 1965, was \$125,000 and the total earnings figure was \$134,125. It might be noted further that \$66,500, almost one-half of the total earnings for the sample, was earned by fifteen households.

CHAPTER V TABLE 2

TRANSFER PAYMENTS RECEIVED, IN 1965, BY TYPE OF PAYMENT

	Under \$500.		\$500.- 999.		\$1,000.- 1,499		Over \$1,500.		TOTAL		
<u>Received</u>	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Social Assistance	5	5.9	23	27.0	31	36.5	18	21.2	8	9.4	85 100
Social Allowance (including Family Allowance)	1	1.1	67	71.3	26	27.7					94 100
Old Age Pension	74	79.1	1	1.1	12	12.5	0	0.0	7	7.3	94 100
Disability Pension	91	96.7	2	2.1					1	1.1	94 100

CHAPTER V TABLE 3

FAMILIES RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE BY DURATION OF RECEIPIENCE

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
None		6	6.0
Occasional - up to three months		18	17.6
Temporary - three to nine months		54	52.9
Permanent - nine to twelve months		24	23.5
TOTAL		102	100.0

Administration of Transfer Payments - The distribution of welfare to 3,500 people on the five reserves in the St. Paul area is handled by one member of the Indian Affairs Branch staff. Thus, one man is responsible for

administering the needs of approximately 450 or more families per month. In fact this Indian Affairs Branch staff worker is so badly overworked simply keeping up with his paper work that as far as we were able to determine, he has no time to visit any of the families for which he is responsible in the field, to see the conditions under which they live. All of the interview respondents reported that he had never been in their homes.

The actual distribution of welfare payments is made as follows. On a specified day, once every two weeks, the staff member comes to the reserve to distribute the welfare allotments. The recipients line up outside the Band Hall in the morning and enter the Hall one at a time to receive their allotment. Those on Social Allowance receive cheques, while those on Social Assistance usually receive grocery vouchers. Occasionally, because of the limited time available to the staff worker, two or three families are given one joint voucher to be taken to a store. Having to line up for the allotments, having to take a voucher to a storekeeper, and occasionally having to go shopping with the two other families who are listed on the voucher, are inevitably somewhat humiliating. In addition however, as seven members of the reserve reported, the welfare man frequently uses profanity when distributing the welfare allotments - even when women are present. This man's actions can have no positive effects upon the people's pride or self-respect.

Attitudes Toward Welfare - The reserve members appear to be almost unanimous in their attitudes about welfare. In reply to the question of who should get welfare - forty-four point two percent stated "old people, the sick, the unemployed", and an additional thirty-six point four percent offered the similar, and somewhat vague, statement of "those who need it". This represents eighty point six percent of the sample. The remaining nineteen point four percent said "everybody on this reserve". The Indian people's concern for providing for the needy derives from their cultural traditions regarding their community. Before the advent of State welfare, the Indian people used to share the resources of the community among all of the members. Thus, those people who were unable to provide for themselves, for whatever reason, were given provisions by the other members of the Band. This practice of sharing carried over into the period when the people began leaving the reserves and entering the non-reserve world. Frequently, when a man would leave the reserve to live and work in a town or city, his neediest relatives

would move in with him and share his new resources. This practice usually led to the man's return to the reserve where he earned a smaller but more "economical" income. Today the people feel that the State should provide for the needy and, because there are no jobs available in the area, the vast majority are considered needy.

If they could choose between working or receiving relief, contrary to the popular opinion of the white world concerning Indians, most would prefer to have jobs - even for the same amount of money they receive for welfare. In December of 1964, the St. Paul Indian Affairs Branch instituted a Community Employment Program, (CEP), on the Saddle Lake Reserve. Participation was voluntary and the men who preferred not to work on it were given their normal welfare payments. Eighty percent of the men on the reserve worked on that project for the minimum wage. None of the men worked a forty hour week because the funds available for the program were inadequate. Consequently, any families who did not get what they normally received under welfare were given the difference in welfare payments. In interviews with twenty of the men who worked on this project they all stated that they knew they were, in effect, working for welfare, which is prohibited under federal and provincial law, but they "wanted to work". The CEP was not in operation on the reserve in the winter of 1965, and the reserve members were resentful of this.

With regard to what welfare payments should cover and what they apparently do cover now, the members were again unanimous. All stated that at least food and clothing should be provided for those who need it. Sixty-nine percent said the payments now cover only food and the remaining thirty-one point four percent said it is not even providing enough for food. All but one of the respondents reported that the present welfare payments were inadequate for even a subsistence level. The one man who disagreed, had an annual income (from all sources) of \$2,750. The system of giving out welfare through vouchers was favoured by thirty-two percent of the respondents interviewed. Their reason for favouring vouchers was that the voucher system prevents parents from spending the allotment on liquor and guaranteed that the children would be fed. The sixty-eight percent who opposed the voucher system gave these reasons for their position: "women should have cash because they know what to buy", fourteen percent; "vouchers are restrictive", thirty-nine percent; and "vouchers do not provide carfare to get into town", fourteen percent.

### Total Family Incomes From All Sources

We have now reviewed all of the sources of income available to members of the families interviewed. What was the distribution of total household incomes during 1965 for the sample members? This distribution is found in Table 4. The figures in the table include income from all sources, including wages, Family Allowance, Social Assistance, Social Allowance, Old Age Pensions, and Disability Pensions. The figures show that almost half of the sample, forty-four percent, had incomes of no more than \$1,900. Sixty-two percent had incomes under \$2,460., and only nine percent of the sample earned more than \$3,700. These figures become particularly noteworthy when it is remembered that they are figures for households averaging more than seven members, not the four or five members of the typical Canadian family. It should be further noted that the modal or most frequent income category among sample members was the \$1,401. - \$1,900. per year category. The average per capita income on the reserve in 1965 was \$176. The average income in 1965, of the fifty-three percent of the sample households which were on temporary relief, between three and nine months of the year, was \$1,178. There is no more dramatic evidence of the abject poverty of the reserve than these figures. It should be reiterated that these are very heavily supplemented incomes, since no fewer than ninety-four percent of the households which were contacted during the interviewing received Social Assistance during a certain portion of the year.

CHAPTER V TABLE 4

#### TOTAL FAMILY REVENUE FROM ALL SOURCES FOR SADDLE LAKE RESERVE SAMPLE MEMBERS

<u>Revenue</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
\$ 0. - \$ 900.	9	8.8
\$ 901. - \$1,400.	15	14.7
\$1,401. - \$1,900.	21	20.6
\$1,901. - \$2,450.	18	17.8
\$2,451. - \$3,050.	12	11.7
\$3,051. - \$3,700.	18	17.8
\$3,701. - \$4,400.	2	1.9
\$4,401. - \$5,150.	2	1.9
Over \$5,150.	<u>5</u>	<u>4.8</u>
TOTAL	102	100.0

### Current Programs for the Reserve

This section of the chapter will describe some of the economic programs and resources available to the reserve. Three topics will be discussed: programs for the reserve; programs for individuals; and the limitations of these programs.

Programs for the Reserve - The Indian Affairs Branch has various economic programs for the reserve. The main programs are: Community Employment Programs or winter works projects; Community Development Programs and programs devised by Indian Affairs Branch agricultural and economic advisers. In addition, the Bands can lease reserve lands to non-reserve farmers on a crop-sharing basis. The Community Employment Programs (CEP's) are projects instituted during low-employment periods to create jobs and accomplish improvements needed by the reserve community. In 1964 the CEP consisted of clearing brush on the Saddle Lake Reserve. The intention of the local Indian Affairs agency supervisor, was to have the men clear brush from some land so that the area could be either farmed by the Band members or leased by the Band to non-reserve farmers on a crop-sharing basis. He hoped that the Band Council would see the rationality behind investing Band funds for such a project. However, the council seems reluctant to institute future land clearing projects using Band funds. Rather, it appears that the council will wait for future CEP funds before more land is cleared. As mentioned earlier, the Indian Affairs Branch did not have a CEP in 1965 on the Saddle Lake Reserve. This was apparently due to the replacement of the supervisor by a new man from a supervisory position in the Department of Northern Affairs.

The Indian Affairs Branch Community Development Department has started community development projects on many reserves. On the Saddle Lake Reserve a two day community development seminar, in March, 1966, resulted in the formation of a community development committee composed of four members of the reserve to suggest programs for the reserve. The committee has, to date, initiated a program to start a masonry school on the reserve.

The Indian Affairs Branch has an Economic and Agricultural Director in its St. Paul office. His function is to advise the Band Council about its financial matters and to advise individual reserve members on their financial and development problems.

Prior to 1965, the man had resided on one of the nearby reserves as Indian Affairs Branch representatives. When the Indian Affairs Branch was reorganized along functional lines he was placed in the central St. Paul office to handle the five reserves in that area. The man had previously helped the people fix their equipment, suggested methods for improving their farms, and advised them on financial matters. Now he can visit the reserves only rarely. He attends the Band Council meetings and advises the councils on financial affairs. He is also available to assist individual members with their financial problems. However, he does not seem to be concerned with advising people how to start farming their land again. This, despite the fact that fifty percent of the reserve members stated that they would like to farm their lands but are unable to start because of financial difficulties.

Programs for Individuals - There are many possibilities available to the reserve member concerned with economic development. Among the more noteworthy are the government rotated herd program; loans from the Band funds; agriculture loans from the Indian Affairs Branch; and bank loans.

The rotating herd program is one in which the federal government gives an individual a small herd of cattle for a three year period. At the end of the period he can either return the cattle to the government and request a new herd or buy the cattle outright. In either case the individual keeps title to all of the calves produced by his rotating herd during the three year period. The intention of the government is to help small or beginning cattlemen build up their herds to an adequate size. It is the policy of the Indian Affairs Branch to pay welfare to needy participants in this program for the first few years of the program. The purpose is to insure that the men will not have to sell the calves in order to feed their families, thus destroying the goal of building up the herds.

The Band members are able to borrow money from the reserve's Band funds. The individual must make his request to the Band Council and, if it is approved, provide the required collateral. The Band Council has a high, and somewhat arbitrary, scale for collateral. At the council meeting which the interviewers attended, one reserve member had to put up three cows as collateral for a \$200. loan. The high rates, as two of the council members reported, are necessitated by the fact that past debts by some Band members have gone unpaid. In fact, approximately \$1,700. in bad debts have been written off the Band Council's books.

Bank loans, of course, are available to all reserve members who can provide evidence of their ability to repay the loans. The most obvious guarantee is a steady job over a number of years. Unfortunately, only seventeen point six percent of the reserve members have what might be classified as a steady job - working on the job for at least nine months of the year.

The Indian Affairs Branch provides small agricultural loans to reserve farmers who need money for short periods during the summer. The loans are usually for seed or materials of minor cost - such as wire for fences or small part for machinery.

Limitations of these Programs - There are many limitations - legalistic, structural and attitudinal in nature - to the above programs and these will now be specified.

The Community Employment Programs, when applicable to the reserve, are contrary to federal and provincial law because the participants are, in effect, working for relief. Though the reserve members are overwhelmingly willing to participate in the program, and the reserve benefits from the project, many local Indian Affairs Branch superintendents are reluctant to use the program in their area.

The community development programs appear to have great potential for the reserves. Eighty percent of the people interviewed on the Saddle Lake Reserve had heard about the Community Development Committee on the reserve and were apparently enthusiastic about it - though the vast majority did not actually understand what community development means. They appeared to believe that it was simply another federally financed project to provide funds for the reserve. The regularly scheduled meetings of the Saddle Lake Community Development Committee are held without the attendance of a representative of the Indian Affairs Community Development Department. The four committee members, all without previous community development experience or leadership training, are thus, restricted when it comes to questioning their proposals or examining the economic feasibility or value of the proposals to the reserve. Consequently the only proposal made by the committee has been for a masonry school to be set up on the reserve. The Indian Affairs Branch will provide a community development officer for the reserve if the Band Council requests one. However, to date, the council has not seen fit to do so.

The rotating herds in the past have only totalled three to six cows.

The chances of "building up a herd" from this number of cows are slight. In addition the welfare payments paid to reserve members are so inadequate that the participants are at times virtually required to sell a few of their calves in order to provide adequately for their families. The Indian Affairs Branch recently altered its policy and is giving some of the participants herds of twenty cows. The men who receive the rotating herds must naturally have sufficient machinery and facilities to guarantee that the cows will be properly cared for and will not die or suffer illness during the three year period. The actual economic conditions of the vast majority of the reserve's families negates the possibility of many of them having the machinery and facilities to properly care for the cows.

The Indian Act imposes restrictions on the reserve member who wants to acquire a bank loan for the purpose of purchasing anything. Section 88 (1) of the Indian Act states that "the real and personal property of an Indian or a Band situated on a reserve is not subject to charge, pledge, mortgage, attachment, levy, distress or execution in favour or at the instance of any person other than an Indian". Though individual machinery dealers could sell machinery to a reserve members on a time-payment plan, most dealers appear reluctant to do so because they would have to receive permission from the Indian Affairs Branch in order to repossess the machinery.

In addition to the limitations stated above, one more is especially noteworthy. Under sections 61 to 68 of the Indian Act (titled "Management of Indian Monies) the Band Councils are permitted to spend the Band funds only on such things as are stipulated in the Indian Act. Also, the councils are prohibited from distributing more than fifty percent of the capital monies of the Band on a per capita basis. All expenditures from Band funds must be approved by the Ottawa office of the Indian Affairs Branch. This approval is sent to the local Indian Affairs Branch from Ottawa. The total transaction usually takes three to four weeks. Thus, the Band Council can only use its own money if the Indian Affairs Branch approves of what it is doing.

#### Future Prospects for the Reserve

Positive changes in the economic situation of the reserve families must come from two sources: Community Development Programs; and Vocational Training Programs.

reserve and the surrounding white communities. The white communities are aware of the fact that a prospering reserve community must inevitably be a benefit to the surrounding non-reserve communities because of the added spending power of the reserve and the likelihood of greater contact between the two communities. Because of the lack of prosperity in the white communities around the reserve, it seems obvious that the federal and provincial governments will have to support these programs with financial and technical assistance.

The Vocational Training Programs are necessary to provide those who want to leave the reserve with the skills that they must have if they are to enter the cities and compete on an equal basis with white workers. Many of the people who have left the reserve found that they could not get employment in the cities and immediately became members of the welfare rolls. The saving to the governments, in the long run, could be substantial if an investment is made to train these people before they leave the reserve.

Steps toward the development of an appropriate vocational education program have been taken with the establishment of the Vocational Training School at Fort McMurray. During the course of interviewing we discussed this school and the opportunities which it offered with many men on the reserve. Almost without exception they expressed interest in availing themselves of this kind of opportunity. However, it should be noted further that most of the five or six men from the Saddle Lake Reserve, who have been to the Fort McMurray school, have failed to make employment usage of their training, either because they dropped out of the program and returned to the reserve, or because they were unable to find positions for which they were now qualified, within commuting distance of the reserve. It would appear, accordingly, that any very extensive vocational training program which may be developed should include three important features, (1) a counselling service should be available in the school to try to help Indians cope with the problems which they experience as a result of separation from family and the life of the reserve which they know, (2) a placement service should be developed to try to make sure that Indians who complete the course of training are placed in jobs which make use of their newly acquired skills and are helped in solving the new adjustment problems which they must inevitably encounter, (3) an aspect of the vocational education program should be devoted to preparing the Indian students to live contentedly in the urban environment, since in most cases the number of jobs appropriate to the skills of the vocational school graduates, which are within commuting

distance of the reserve will be very limited.

#### Summary

We have seen in this chapter that the Saddle Lake Reserve has great potential as a farm community. The 63,000 acres include some of the best soil in the province, and it appears that in the past virtually all members of the reserve were able to be self-supporting through farming, though it must be born in mind that the size of the Band was smaller. Currently only five households on the reserve support themselves adequately through farming. It would appear, both from the occupations which the men interviewed reported, and from the attitudes toward farming which were expressed, that many families would be interested in getting a start again in farming. However, they do not have the resources themselves to make this start, laws designed to protect Indians are such as to make businessmen unwilling to sell machinery on time payment plans, and the current programs of the Indian Affairs Branch are ineffective in helping many Indians achieve farming self-sufficiency. Any future programs which are set up should have sufficient continuity of advisement and supervision that Indian participants do not become discouraged and sell out as many did following the transfer of Mr. Boris from the reserve in 1947. It appears that the agricultural potential is the single greatest untapped resource on the reserve.

The employment picture on the reserve is a discouraging one. There is no full-time employment available on the reserve, and such employment is extremely limited in the vicinity of the reserve. The result is that fewer than one-fourth of the families interviewed had any member who worked for nine months or more during 1965, including the five families more or less successfully engaged in farming. Most workers on the reserve are able to find only part-time work, many of them in the sugar beet fields of southern Alberta. Here the wages are considered attractive by most of our informants, but the living conditions are primitive and the atmosphere is generally not "wholesome". Drinking is common, difficulties with the police are rather frequent, and court fines are high. A certain proportion of workers buy second hand cars. Thus, only a small proportion of the beet workers return to the reserve with very much in savings at the end of the season.

Because the employment opportunities are so inadequate the overwhelming proportion of households interviewed were forced to depend heavily on Social Assistance and Social Allowance payments. Ninety-four percent of the sample

members received some Social Assistance during 1965, seventy-six percent for more than three months and twenty-four percent for more than nine months. When the total of earned income during 1965 for the sample is compared with the transfer payments which the sample received during 1965 the size of the payments is almost equal to the size of the earnings. The payments amounted to \$125,500., while the earnings totalled \$134,125.

Despite this large sum which is paid out in transfer payments the total household income figures for the sample for 1965 were very low. The per capita income on the reserve was \$176. Sixty-two percent of the households had less than \$2,450. of income from all sources, and it should be remembered that the average household has more than seven members, not four or five members as is typical of the white Canadian family.

The two programs which appear to have the best prospects for reducing the very heavy dependency rates on the reserve and restoring people to productive self-sufficiency are the Community Development and Vocational Training programs. The former is currently making little progress because, although there is a "development committee" on the reserve, it is getting no guidance and it lacks experience. A Community Development office could be appointed to the reserve, but this would require a request by the Band Council, and so far the council has shown no interest in making it. There is little doubt however, that significant improvement on the reserve will come only through an effective Community Development program. Ways must be discovered to get such a program in operation, without this happening as just another program imposed by the white man. For it to happen in this way would destroy its possibility of achieving its basic goals of increasing the initiative, responsibility, and self respect of the people of the Band.

The second program which is badly needed is a Vocational Training program. Such a program is in pilot operation at the Vocational Training School at Fort McMurray, and there are plans for the expansion of the facilities there. The work experience of five or six men from the reserve who have been through this program clearly points to current deficiencies in the way it is working, however. It was emphasized that an adequate Vocational Training program should include not only vocational training itself but also three other crucial features: (1) a counselling program to try to help the students cope with the problems they experience because of separation from family and friends on the reserve; (2) a

placement service to try to insure that those completing the course are placed in jobs making use of their new skills, and to provide follow-up help, for as long as it is needed, in solving the inevitable problems of adjustment; (3) both curriculum content and counselling designed to prepare Indian students to live contentedly in the city, since few will be able to find work close to the reserve.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>The Farm Potential of Two Saskatchewan Reserves, Buckley and Campbell, Centre for Community Studies, Saskatoon, 1962, p. 14.



## CHAPTER VI

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LARGER WORLD

This section will deal with the reserve members' relationships with the non-reserve world. The two basic relationships involve the reserve and the nearby towns, and the reserve and the city. In addition, there will be discussions of the transportation and communication facilities of the reserve, and the relationship of the Indian Affairs Branch to the reserve.

The term "town" will be used to mean the townships in the area with less than 5,000 population. The term "city" will refer solely to Edmonton.

The intention of this section is to analyze the frequency and types of contacts the reserve members have had with the city and towns, the discrimination they experience, the attitudes and images they hold as a result of these experiences, and the effect of these attitudes upon the Indian people's mobility patterns outside the reserve community.

#### Transportation and Communication Resources

##### Transportation

A major problem on the Saddle Lake reserve is the lack of adequate transportation facilities. There is no bus service between the reserve and the neighboring towns. Statistically, the reserve members appear to have adequate personal transportation: 52 per cent of the families in the interview sample own either a car or truck. However, as the interviewers observed, at least one third of these vehicles are in such poor mechanical condition that the likelihood of the vehicles being used frequently was slight. The reserve members, having little or no money and a need for transportation, have a history of purchasing mechanically-unsound used cars. The evidence of this history is easily seen by travelling through the reserve and seeing many of the homes with two or three inoperative old cars near the houses. The lack of sufficient, sound transportation makes trips into town -- for grocery shopping, discussions with the Indian Affairs Branch staff, or for emergencies -- a hardship. The interviewers observed at least eleven cases in which a male or female reserve member was hitchhiking into a nearby town for one of the above reasons. The alternative to hitchhiking is paying someone \$5 to drive them into town. Since most reserve members must go into

town more than once a month -- shopping must be done often because of no refrigerators -- the expense for the monthly trips is quite substantial to many families and uses up a significant portion of their financial resources. The reserve's pensioners are most severely affected by the lack of transportation facilities. The pensioners cannot hitchhike and must pay for their transportation. Their monthly pensions are severely reduced by this expense.

The lack of adequate transportation for the reserve cuts down the amount of contact the reserve members can have with the outside world.

#### Mass Media

One constant source of contact with the non-reserve world for all families is through radio. Every home that the interviewers visited had a portable radio. The only two stations that the people seemed to listen to were CHED and CFCW, the former for rock-and-roll and the latter for country and western music. The listeners do get the five-minute newscasts every half hour but to most of them the news from Edmonton, Ottawa, the United States and the world appears too abstract to comprehend.

The interviewers found only eight homes that contained newspapers or magazines. The Free Press and the Edmonton Journal's weekend edition were the only newspapers observed.

#### Communications

The reserve has an obvious shortage of telephones. There are, in fact, only two on the reserve. One is a pay telephone located centrally alongside the Catholic Church. The second telephone belongs to a family that lives in the southwest corner of the reserve. The lack of telephones poses problems during emergencies and is a roadblock to more contact with the Indian Affairs Branch in St. Paul. Many of the people who, through lack of transportation, cannot go into St. Paul for minor and major problems relative to the Agency are also hindered from contacting the Agency by telephone.

The lack of transportation and communication facilities for the reserve is a definite roadblock to facilitating and maintaining a continual contact with the non-reserve world.

The Band Council has considered the possibility of purchasing buses and setting up a service between the reserve and St. Paul. This service, which could be run on a three-or-four-times per week basis, would allow those without transportation to go to St. Paul frequently, and at a minimal cost. Also, it might allow the townspeople to come out to the reserve in order to get an idea of the Indian people's present situation. In addition, the bus could be used to transport the reserve children to the schools in the nearby towns. However, the Council seems to feel that there are two obstacles. First, the Council feels that the reserve members would be reluctant to pay any bus fare, believing that they own the bus. Second, even with getting the franchise for the school bus service, it would be uneconomical to maintain the buses for any other service. What appears to be needed is a guaranteed subsidy for the bus service.

#### Relations with Towns Near the Reserve

The Saddle Lake reserve is surrounded by Counties 12 and 19. The towns in this area include St. Paul with a population of 3,500, Spedden with a population of 260, Vilna with a population of 400, and Duverney with a population of 75.

St. Paul, which lies 15 miles to the east of the reserve, has a large French-Canadian population and is the main non-reserve center of activity for the Indian population of the area. Aside from the usual town attractions -- stores, movies, bars and banks, etc. -- St. Paul also is the location of the regional Indian Affairs Branch office, the regional Catholic Indian Residential school, and the public and separate schools attended by the children of the Saddle Lake reserve.

Spedden, Vilna and Duverney are small towns on the periphery of the reserve. These three towns, inhabited largely by Canadians of Ukrainian descent, are mainly frequented by reserve members who live on the perimeter of the reserve near these towns. The main reasons for frequenting these towns appears to be the shopping facilities and the bars which they offer. The 20 people interviewed who frequented these three towns stated that they preferred these towns to St. Paul because the Ukrainian people are more friendly to Indians than are the French people. As these Indian

respondents stated, the Ukrainian people seem to have an understanding and appreciation of the Indians' problems because of the "common hardships" which Ukrainian peasants and Indians have experienced. All of the people who do their shopping in the three small towns are given credit by the storekeepers there. A shopkeeper, when interviewed, said there were two reasons for this. First, he has dealt with the reserve for 15 years and trusts the people who trade at his store. Second, credit is a way of insuring that the customers will return. The storekeepers in the smaller towns are largely dependent upon the Indian trade and, it appears, go out of their way to establish friendly relations with the Indian people. One of the storekeepers in Spedden, for example, attends the dances on the nearby reserves and also participates in all the reserve-sponsored baseball tournaments, occasionally playing for one of the reserve teams. The Indian people think of this man as a friend, one who treats them as equals, and respond to his friendship by trading in his store. The contact with the St. Paul storekeepers appears to be limited strictly to business matters and most of the reserve members feel that they are unfriendly to Indians.

#### Discrimination in Towns

The Indian people speak in amorphous terms when discussing discrimination in the area. There are only two categories of discrimination they relate. The first involves white farmers who offer the Indians jobs as root and rock pickers, while white farmhands are offered regular farm jobs. The second involves discrimination by the police in St. Paul. Five people reported that the police often stop their cars on the highways and search the cars thoroughly for liquor. This would be justifiable -- due to the law prohibiting liquor on the reserves -- were it not for the fact that these people said they had not been in the liquor vendor's while in town and had not been driving as if they were in an intoxicated state. In addition, two of the five people were known by the interviewers to be abstainers. To the reserve members this appears as a definite form of discrimination by the "white police".

The remainder of the Indians' expressions of discrimination are vaguely stated feelings of the "white man's dislike for Indians."

The two Indian female interviewers were involved in a third form of discrimination. They were refused service in one of St. Paul's beauty parlors, though there were three attendants and no other customers in the shop. The interviewers went to a second beauty shop, were served, and were told that the first shop consistently refused to serve Indians. Quite probably the Indian people are aware of the stores that refuse service to Indians and, by avoiding these stores, they unconsciously suppress their knowledge of discrimination.

The reserve's children attend the schools in the local towns. As will be described fully in the section on education, the first few years of the school integration program produced a number of incidents of discrimination by teachers and white students against the Indian children. In recent years, however, there apparently have been no incidents of discrimination that either the Indian children or parents interviewed could remember. Contact between the white and Indian groups in the school situation appears to have produced a lessening of prejudice in the schools.

Until 1965, the Indian people of Alberta were not allowed, by law, to drink in the bars or purchase liquor from the liquor vendors. However, as most of those interviewed reported, they frequently entered the bars and always were able to contact a "bootlegger" to acquire bottles of liquor. Of those people interviewed, 59.4 per cent thought it was a good idea to let Indians drink in bars. The remaining 40.6 per cent of the sample thought it was a poor idea because "the families are deprived" of food through the outlays for liquor. Coincidentally, 71.5 per cent of the respondents favored allowing liquor on the reserves. They believed it would curb drunken driving, limit spending on liquor, and allow the Indian to be equal to the whites.

Drinking seems necessary to many Indians because they appear to use intoxication as an escape from the frustrations of their existence. Whether or not the privilege of drinking on the reserve, when legalized in the near future, increases or decreases the Indian people's rate of consumption remains to be seen. However, if the reserve members curb their drinking in the towns' bars, one of the more frequently used channels of contact

with the surrounding white world will have been eliminated.

The reserve members are reluctant to leave the reserve and establish residence in the nearby towns. They see no increased advantage in living in the nearby towns. Their perception of a lack of jobs is still present and they would have to leave their friends for no perceivable economic gain. Three families from the reserve have previously lived in St. Paul. They stated that the initial attraction was the "higher" welfare payments off the reserve. They eventually realized that the additional payments were largely for rent and this convinced them to return to the reserve.

#### Relations with the City

The main factors to be considered here are: channels of contact with the city; effect of this contact; and the mobility patterns and problems of the reserve Indian who considers going to the city.

#### Channels of Contact

The three basic means of contact between the reserve members and the city are: having previously lived in the city; visiting the city; and having friends and relatives who live in the city.

At one time or another, 30.8 per cent of the sample have lived in Edmonton. Of these, 6.4 per cent stated that they like the city, 10.6 per cent disliked it and 13.8 per cent were neutral in their feelings. The reason stated by all for leaving was the inability to get steady jobs.

Only 9.4 per cent of the sample said they had never visited Edmonton. This group was composed entirely of pensioners and men on welfare nine months of the year. As Table 1 indicates, 25.9 per cent stated that they visit the city at least six times a year. Twenty-nine per cent did not specify how often they visit the city.

CHAPTER VI TABLE 1  
VISITS BY MEMBERS OF THE SADDLE LAKE SAMPLE TO THE CITY

Welfare Group	"Sporadic"	6 plus/year	1 - 5/year	Never	Total
None	1	1	3	0	5
Occasional	6	5	5	0	16
Temporary	13	13	13	7	46
Permanent	5	3	9	1	18
	29.4%	25.9%	35.3%	9.4%	100%

Of the people interviewed, 74.7 per cent have relatives living in Edmonton. When asked how these people felt about having their relatives move to the city, 80 per cent said they were happy as long as the relatives were able to get good jobs and be better off than they were on the reserve.

The preceding statistics indicate that the Saddle Lake reserve members have had ample opportunity to form attitudes about the city, based upon actual contact. The attitudes of sample members are enlightening.

To the question of whether they would be willing to move to the city, 84 per cent said no unconditionally, 9.1 per cent said they would if they were assured of finding a job, and 6.8 per cent said they would be willing to move unconditionally. As the data in Table 2 show, no one in the full employment category was willing to move to the city, while 11 of the 14 respondents who were willing to move were either in the permanent or temporary welfare categories. This seems to indicate that those with skills are unwilling to leave, while those with no skills are more willing to move to the city -- possibly they feel conditions can't be worse for them in the city.

CHAPTER VI TABLE 2  
RESERVE MEMBERS' WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TO CITY

<u>Welfare Group</u>	"No" Unconditionally	"Yes" Conditionally	"Yes" Unconditionally	Total
None	5	0	0	5
Occasional	12	3	0	15
Temporary	39	5	4	48
Permanent	18	0	2	20
	84.1%	9.1%	6.8%	100%

In addition to the attitudes toward moving to Edmonton, the Indian people's attitudes about city people and the city itself are worth noting. When asked whether city whites appeared different from rural whites to the Indians, 58.1 per cent said there was no difference between them. The remaining 41.9 per cent of the respondents felt city whites were different. Sixteen per cent preferred city to country whites, and 19.4 per cent reported no preference but they stated that they perceived a difference.

The city was considered to be a "good" place by 25 per cent of the respondents, and a "bad" place by 25 per cent of the respondents. Half of the sample members held "neutral" attitudes. The "permanent welfare" group -- mostly older people -- were the largest group to declare that the city is a "bad" place. Sixty per cent of this group viewed the city in a negative manner and this group, though the second smallest in the population, had the largest number of people stating a negative attitude. Quite possibly the older people's attitudes differed from the younger people's because, having had less contact with the city than the younger people, they are basing their attitudes on long outdated perceptions.

Another interesting set of responses was made in answer to the question, "Where would you seek help for problems if you were in the city?" The two institutions whose primary purpose is to help Indian people in Edmonton -- the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre and the Indian Affairs Branch -- each received only 14.3 per cent of the responses. Surprisingly, 39.3 per cent of the people said the Police Department was the likeliest place for help. Twenty-one per cent mentioned "friends and relatives" and 3.6 per cent stated that Indians could find no help in the city.

As we noted early in this report, the Indian people who have had very little contact with whites were the most hesitant about talking to the white interviewer, while the people who had had more experience with whites were much more open with the interviewer. It appears clear that contact with whites is extremely important in breaking down Indian fearfulness. The ones who have had the least non-reserve experience are the people with no jobs -- the people on permanent and temporary welfare -- while the reserve members with steady incomes appear to have had greater contact with whites. Simultaneously, the unemployed most often report that they are willing to enter the city to live. We suspect that their reticence when among whites would probably prevent most of them from seeking city employment and their maintenance in the city would have to be provided for by the Department of Public Welfare.

During the three weeks on the reserve prior to the actual use of questionnaires, the interviewers, through daily conversations with the people, found that approximately a third of the people feared that if they

left the reserve they would lose their treaty rights -- free medical care, no income tax, treaty money, etc. The people who stated this fear were in the temporary and permanent welfare categories -- the unemployed. These again are the people who appeared to be most willing to leave the reserve and live in the city.

#### Relationship of Indian Affairs Branch with Reserves

This section of the chapter deals with the Indian Affairs Branch as it provides a link with the larger world for Indians, and with the Indians' attitudes toward it. The Indian Affairs Branch, for all intents and purposes, has historically been, and will probably continue to be, the personification of the white world's intentions toward the Indian people. In this regard, the Indian people's perceptions of, and attitudes toward, the Indian Affairs Branch are crucial to any discussion of relationships with the non-reserve world.

The Indian Affairs Branch has had a channel of communication with the reserves from the beginning of its history. This vehicle was the Indian Affairs Agency Assistant, who lived and worked on the reserve throughout the year. This man handled all of the Indian Affairs Branch's matters on the specific reserve -- distributed welfare, was the agricultural and economic advisor, handled the administration of Indian education, etc. The people of the reserve always knew where the Agency Assistant was and could easily approach him to discuss any of their problems.

In the St. Paul area, there are five Indian reserves and prior to 1965 each had an Agency Assistant on the reserve. In 1965, the decision was made to reorganize the staff at the St. Paul Indian Affairs Branch office along functional lines. Functionalism was in the embryonic stage in the Indian Affairs Branch at this time. Accordingly, the five Agency Assistants were removed from their "jack-of-all-trades" capacities on the reserves and each one was assigned a specific task to be administered on all five of the reserves. The five assistants were to be centrally located in the St. Paul office, which is 15 miles from the nearest reserve -- Saddle Lake reserve -- and 80 miles from the farthest reserve -- Cold Lake reserve.

There were two apparent results of this change to functionalism. The lack of adequate transportation on the reserve resulted in a decrease

in the frequency and type of contact between the reserve members and the Indian Affairs Branch staff. The reserve members appeared to only be coming into the St. Paul office for their most urgent needs. As the respondents in our sample indicated, 28.4 per cent never go to the Agency and another 40.3 per cent go no more than twice a year. The remaining 31.4 per cent go to the Agency at least four times a year. The reasons for journeying to the Agency, according to sample members, are as follows: 27.3 per cent solely for welfare; 50 per cent for "complaints"; and the remaining 22.7 per cent for information, building and farm materials, or wells.

The second result of the change to functionalism appeared to be a definite loss of interest in the personal situations of the Indians by the staff. This situation is apparently normal when a relationship changes from personal, every day contact to an infrequent, administrative contact. This change was apparent in our interview data in two ways. First, in response to the question of what is the purpose of the Indian Affairs Branch, 18.7 per cent of the respondents stated either "to do paperwork" or "to help Indian Affairs people keep their jobs".

An incident that one of the interviewers observed is a second example of this. One of the members of the Saddle Lake reserve telephoned the Agency to find out whether he could come into the office in the afternoon to discuss welfare payments with the administrator of social assistance. The office secretary relayed the request to the administrator, who told her to have the person come in that afternoon. After relaying the message, the secretary then asked him if he was planning to visit the Cold Lake reserve that afternoon. He replied in the affirmative, also admitting that he had just invited the man from the Saddle Lake reserve to come into the office the same afternoon, even though he would not be there. The reluctance of the staff member to have contact with reserve members, other than during his twice-monthly visits to each reserve, appeared quite evident to the interviewer. There appear to have been other similar incidents, according to reports by reserve members.

The results of the change to functionalism appear to be the breakdown of the main channel of direct communication between the Indian Affairs Branch and the Saddle Lake reserve members.

The attitudes of the Indian people toward the Indian Affairs Branch are indicative of the poor relationship between reserve members and the Indian Affairs Branch. In response to the question, "How does the Indian Affairs Branch help the reserve and the Indian people?" 90.2 per cent of the sample responded that the Indian Affairs Branch "does not help". The remaining 9.8 per cent stated either that the Indian Affairs Branch "gives welfare money" or "helps with farming".

Though the Indian people think the Indian Affairs Branch is ineffectual 73.8 percent of the people feel that the Indian Affairs Branch is still necessary because "the Indian people can't do it themselves". The 26.2 per cent who felt the Indian Affairs Branch isn't needed anymore reasoned that "the Indian people can manage themselves" and "the Indian Affairs Branch is useless as it presently is."

When the sample was asked, "How can the Indian Affairs Branch help the reserve?" 61.1 per cent of the sample said simply that the Agency should visit the reserve more to know the Indian people. The remaining 38.9 per cent of the sample said the Agency should help with farming, set up programs for the reserve's economy, and increase welfare payments.

When the sample members were asked, "Who is the present Indian Affairs Agent in St. Paul?" only 32.3 per cent were able to respond correctly. In addition, only 29.9 per cent of the sample stated that they had ever seen or talked to the agent. This man, as noted before, has only been with the St. Paul Indian Affairs Branch office for eight months. However, all of the people interviewed stated that the agent had never made a visit to their reserve.

From the attitudes of the Saddle Lake reserve members, it seems apparent that there is no real communication between the reserve members and the Indian Affairs Branch staff. The situation could be rectified, as the sample stated, by having the Indian Affairs staff visit the reserve more often, in order "to know the Indian people better."

Direct contact between the Indian Affairs Branch staff and the reserve members is not the only source of contact between the two. The Saddle Lake reserve Band Council is a significant source of indirect contact between the Indian Affairs Branch and the reserve members. The Indian

Affairs Branch tells the Council about new programs and the Council relates the news to the reserve members. The Band Council presently has two means of relating facts about programs to the reserve members. First, the individual Council members can tell individual reserve members about new programs. Second, the Band Council can hold periodic Band meetings in which all of the reserve members gather in a large hall and are told about the new program.

Band meetings are not currently being used by the Council on the Saddle Lake reserve to improve communication. At the time of the interviewers' departure from the Saddle Lake reserve, there had not been any Band meetings on the Saddle Lake reserve during 1966. The Councillors stated that it was useless to have Band meetings because only the same small group of people comes to these meetings.

There are serious shortcomings in having the Band Councillors individually tell reserve members about new programs as well. First, the majority of the Councillors appear to be unqualified to participate in the Council meetings because of the lack of leadership training and their inability to understand the problems discussed at the Council meetings. As was described in the section on Social Organization, the most financially successful Councillor appears to be the sole meaningful contributor to the meetings. The other Councillors, through respect for this man's ability and their own apparent inability to understand the various matters, appear to rely totally on following his voting lead on all matters before the Band Council. Thus, the Councillor's lack of understanding of matters prevents them from communicating the matters to the individual reserve members. Second, this same wealthy farmer is viewed by many of the permanent and temporary welfare recipients as a "white man" because he is a very successful farmer and because he lives on the southwestern corner of the reserve and has many of the white farmers in the area as close friends. All of this causes a sense of alienation between many reserve members and the most capable person on the Council. Two other members of the Council also live in a remote corner of the reserve. These two men are also doing very well as farmers and appear to also have infrequent contact with the other reserve members. Thus, communication possibilities between Band Councillors and Band members are very limited.

Communication between the reserve members and the Indian Affairs Branch is not solely from the Agency to the reserve. The same indirect source of contact -- the Band Council -- can be used to convey the reserve members' wishes and attitudes to the Agency. Unfortunately, the lack of contact between the Band Councillors and the other reserve members restricts this avenue of communication. In addition, the reserve members themselves have no conception of the Band Councillors' responsibilities and duties as elected officers. This appears to restrict the attempts by the reserve members to have attitudes conveyed to the Indian Affairs Branch by their Councillors.

An apparent need on the reserve is an adult education program that will educate the people about the rights and responsibilities of elected representatives and constituencies in an elective system. The Band Council appeared to be unnecessary as a channel of contact before the "functional" system was instituted on the Saddle Lake reserve. Now, however, the Council is a necessary channel of contact between the reserve and the Agency, but both the people and the Councillors are ill-educated to the roles the Councillors should be playing.

#### Salesmen

In past years there have been very few salesmen coming out to the reserve to deal with the Indians. This appears due to the fact that the community was poor and its "Indian" needs seemed small.

In the Fall of 1966 the reserve members will have electricity in every home. Many of the reserve members have indicated that they would like to get refrigerators, lamps and televisions. Yet, none of these people have any idea of the quality differences or payment plans available to them, assuming they can purchase these items on time payment plans. In addition, the acceptance of electricity on the reserve seems part and parcel of their acceptance of the white man's material world. Thus, the likelihood is great that the Indian people will be interested in purchasing other articles to "modernize" their homes.

Two results seem apparent. First, the people will be susceptible to almost any salesman who comes to the area and is willing to sell articles to the Indian people on an installment plan. Second, the reserve members will become involved in a pattern of monthly payments that (if they can maintain the payments) will prevent them from ever saving enough money to return

to farming again. The need for "necessities" alone that are related to having electricity will very likely force the Indian Affairs Branch to increase its total outlay of social assistance money in order to insure that the people are guaranteed enough money for food for themselves and the children.

What appears to be needed is some sort of an instruction program about what is a necessity in a home with electricity; what are the most realistic products and prices for the average reserve family to buy; and what installment plans can mean to the Indian family.

#### Summary

The reserve members' relationship with the non-reserve world, and consequently his attitude and ideas about that world, is based on several things: having lived off the reserve; having visited there; having gone there for business or pleasure; from stories about the non-reserve world related by other reserve members; from the actions of the "white police" toward the Indian people; from himself or his children having gone to school off the reserve; and to his view of the Indian Affairs Branch as a representative of the white world toward the Indian people.

For many of the people it is a combination of all of the above to varying degrees, but to a few the crucial factors -- living in or frequently visiting the non-reserve world -- are missing. These people, mostly the older people, must rely on second-hand accounts and outdated beliefs to construct their attitudes. These attitudes always appear to be negative.

The more financially successful reserve members are reluctant to leave the reserve while the least successful members, by comparison, seem anxious to leave the reserve and enter the city. Significantly, the least successful members are also the ones who have had the least amount of personal contact with the white world. The people with the least contact with whites were also the people who were most hesitant to talk to the white interviewer. Their limited contact with whites and with urban life would probably produce a feeling of alienation in them upon arriving in the city. In addition, their reticence would probably hinder their chances of finding decent jobs and remaining in the city.

## CHAPTER VII

### EDUCATION

This section deals with the education of the children on the reserve. We shall describe the educational opportunities for youths and for adults. In addition to the educational opportunities available to the reserve members, we shall describe the problems Indian children have with education, the people's attitudes toward the educational system, and the administration and structure of education institutions in and near the reserve.

The discussion of youth and education is divided into three specific phases: the pre-integration history of the reserve education; integration, its history and effects; and non-integrated schools.

#### Pre-Integration Education

Prior to 1956, when the Saddle Lake Reserve people were allowed to enter voluntary school integration programs, the children on the Saddle Lake Reserve went either to a church-run day school or to a church-run Indian residential school. An Indian day school is a school operated on an Indian reserve in the same manner as non-Indian public schools. The children live at home and travel to school daily. The reserve day schools are operated by the majority religious denomination of the reserve. As stipulated in Section 120 of the Indian Act, Indian residential schools are boarding schools for children having poor home conditions, and for children who because of remoteness from the reserve school are unable to attend day schools. As the Indian Affairs Branch's pamphlet, Indian Education, states, "Historically the Churches have had a long and fruitful association with Indian education. In fact, a century ago the Churches provided the majority of schools. Today, Canada's Indian Residential Schools are operated by four religious denominations, Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church, and Presbyterian."

The Catholic people on the Saddle Lake Reserve have had a residential school either on the reserve or in St. Paul since about 1910. In 1935, the residential school moved from the reserve to St. Paul so that it might accommodate Indian students from the other four reserves in the area. The Protestant members of the reserve had either to attend the Catholic-run day schools or go to a Protestant-run Indian residential school in another area. Most of the Protestant students attended the Indian Residential School in Edmonton. The

remainder either attended residential schools in other areas or did not attend school at all.

Of the sample interviewed for this study, 93.3 per cent of the respondents had attended an Indian residential school and, of those having attended who expressed an opinion, 59.3 per cent said they liked the school.

From the late 19th Century until the early 1950's the residential schools apparently offered a very meagre academic education to the Indian people. The Indian students were required to work for the school three or four days per school week. The boys would normally work in the fields caring for the school's crops or animals, while the girls worked in the buildings, cleaning the rooms and floors or helping in the kitchen. The children apparently attended classes only one or two full days per week. In addition, most Indian students were required to leave school when they were 16 years of age rather than stay in school and complete as many grades as they desired. From discussions with people in the Indian Affairs Branch's Educational Department, it seems apparent that this was a de facto policy of the Indian residential schools, though not a de jure policy; that is, it was almost an unwritten law that Indian students must terminate their schooling at 16 years of age.

Of the 102 reserve members who were interviewed, seven stated that they disliked the residential schools because they had to work three or four days per school week. These men were not in the same age group or religious groups. Five men were in their thirties and two were over 55 years of age. Three of the men were Roman Catholic and the other four were of the United Church, thus indicating that the work policy was not restricted to one religious denomination which ran the schools or to one time period. Most of the other respondents stated that they also had to work three or four days per week but did not feel that this detracted from their liking for the school. They did state, however, that it was part of the reason they did not advance very far in school. Very few of the respondents had more than Grade 7 or 8 education. The other reason given for disliking the residential schools was the "strictness of the priests or ministers". This attitude, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is partly due to the contrast with their parents' leniency and partly to the differences in treatment for boys and girls in the schools.

Voluntary school integration was instituted by the Branch in 1956.

Apparently only a few of the reserve's members were willing to go into the

program in its first year. From conversations with reserve members and the Branch's staff it seems clear that the first participants were almost all Protestant -- possibly reflecting the fact that they felt integration would alleviate the problems of travelling many miles to Protestant "Indian schools". Significantly, of all the people interviewed on the reserve who were under 70 years of age, the only people who still oppose integration are a group of ten Catholics -- only 16 per cent of the interview sample who preferred schools on the reserve.

At present there are 285 children from the reserve attending schools in the neighboring towns. Of these, 165 commute by bus daily over round trip distances of from 30 to 50 miles; 25 are Catholic children who attend the Bluequills Residential School as day students -- they attend classes and are fed dinner there -- and 140 go to separate schools in St. Paul. The remaining 120 children are Catholic pupils who reside in the Bluequills Residential School.

During the first few years of the integration program, both parents and children reported that Indian children encountered a number of difficulties. Among these were their inadequate training in English; discrimination against the Indian children by some of the teachers and non-Indian children; and general insecurity of the Indian children upon entering what to them was an almost alien society.

Before integration, the Indian children had been in classrooms with all Indian classmates. Although they were taught their lessons in English, the rate of progress was significantly slower than the progress of a normal white class. Therefore, when the Indian child in the all-Indian school was promoted to the next grade, it was based upon his ability relative to the other Indian children and not necessarily related to the achievement of his white grade peers. Consequently, upon entering integrated classes, the Indian children found themselves having a more difficult time with the lesson material than even most of the poorer white students.

The response to integration amongst the adults, as the interview sample members stated, was a concern for speaking English in the homes to aid the students in their adjustment to a totally English-speaking day. The interviewers found many homes where the adults were speaking English to two- or three-year old children, intending to facilitate their transition into the integrated world.

Discrimination, or the perception of discrimination by teachers and classmates, was a great problem for the Indian children in the first integrated classes. The point to be made here is that, though these perceptions and attitudes may or may not be factual descriptions of the actual situation, they are facts to the people perceiving the situation. The people responded to the situations according to their perceptions of them and this is what we must understand. Four of the children who were in the first integrated Indian group were interviewed. Their accounts of their experiences in the integrated classes were unanimous. They felt that the teachers were prejudiced against the Indian children. Teachers would reprimand the Indian children for the same misdemeanors that white children committed without punishment. Indian children were always made to sit at the back of the class and all the Indian children were given extra homework, regardless of their individual abilities. One of the Indian boys stated that his older brother had been one of the smartest members of his integrated class but left school in Grade 10 because the teacher kept giving him and the other Indian children more homework than the white children. Frequently the teachers would call the children "stupid Indians" or "dirty Indians" and often punish them physically. The staff of the Indian Affairs Branch corroborated this to some extent, but stated that occasionally the Indian children misinterpreted sincere attempts by teachers to help the children as punishment of the children. This was often the case with regard to extra homework. The Indian children perceived the teachers' actions as prejudicial and therefore responded with a negative attitude toward the system of integration.

These children were shy initially toward their white classmates. They felt that the white children were hostile toward them. The result was that two segregated social groups developed within each "integrated" school and class. Racial fighting, it appears, was a frequent occurrence. A change in this tense situation came about when a few of the more bold Indian children made overtures of friendship to the white children and were slowly allowed to mingle. In time the social segregation broke down significantly. Also, with increased complaints by Indian parents, the Branch took steps to insure that the teachers would not abuse the Indian children. At present it seems that the area's school principals severely penalize any teachers who abuse the Indian children.

The third problem experienced by Indian children in the first integrated classes was the sense of uncertainty and insecurity they felt as they entered,

in their words, "a completely strange society". The reserve had very little contact with the towns before 1950 and the children obviously had even less contact. To have to leave their friends in order to attend a school with strangers, to be a very small minority group within the new setting, and to encounter apparently hostile whites for prolonged periods, all added to the children's fears. They admittedly stayed in a group initially, much as foreigners tend to live in self-segregated communities when they come to a new country. The perceptions of discrimination by teachers and white students tended to knit the Indian children into an even tighter group. Eventual interaction with the white children tended to alleviate their fears, but many of the Indian children in school today still feel alien in the integrated classrooms. One 15-year old girl remarked, "When another Indian child is in the same class with me I am usually very quiet, but when I am the only Indian in the class I know I must represent my people so I try to answer as many questions as possible."

One of the important present consequences of integration is a feeling of inferiority in the Indian parents and children because of the children's poor dress and appearance when compared with the white children. Members of the interview sample were asked whether it was better for the children to go to school by bus daily or live in an Indian residential school. The reason given by over half of this group was that the poor children would be able to get decent clothes in the winter. School children often stated their reluctance to attend classes because they must wear old patched clothes or the same clothes every day. Moreover, the parents often keep children home from school because the children do not have sufficiently warm clothing for the coldest days of winter.

The responsibility for this latter situation appears to lie with the administration of welfare at the Indian Affairs Branch office in St. Paul. The interviewers were not able to scrutinize the welfare ledgers. However, from discussions with Branch staff members and analysis of the statements of income by the welfare recipients, it seems clear that the welfare payments made on the reserve include only the allowance for food. As of April 1, 1965, the Indian Affairs Branch was to distribute welfare according to the individual provincial government scales in each province. However, clothing allotments are apparently not distributed on the Saddle Lake Reserve. The following examples, taken from the people's interview schedules, are representative of all of the interviews with regard to the total welfare payments for each family.

Mr. & Mrs. B. H. and ten children receive \$144 per month. Mr. & Mrs. E. L. C. and six children receive \$85 per month (the eldest child is ten years old). Mr. & Mrs. J. H. C. and seven children receive \$108 per month. The provincial scale calls for \$46 per month for food for a married couple and \$9 per month for each child (the rate varies slightly with the child's age). In addition, the family is to receive a monthly allotment for clothing. In some instances they may also get fuel money. From the examples above it seems clear that the reserve people are receiving only the food allowance, and thus less than the provincial scale states. They would, it appears, have to almost starve in order to purchase adequate clothing, using only their welfare allotments.

The Indian Affairs Branch is presently trying to phase out the all-Indian schools, with the intention of eventually having all of the Indian children attending local provincial schools. At present the Saddle Lake Reserve day school maintains classes for Catholic children in Grades 1 and 2. The Catholic students in Grades 3 through 12 attend schools in the neighboring towns.

As was stated earlier, Section 120 of the Indian Act requires that the teachers in the reserve schools be of the same religion as the majority of the members of the reserve. Catholicism is the dominant religion on the reserve but due to the shortage of Catholic teachers in Canada the Branch has just hired two people from the Philippine Islands and is negotiating with a third. This incident, necessitated by the Indian Act, seems both wasteful and detrimental. It is wasteful in regard to the recruiting expenses involved in acquiring people who will be teaching the Grades 1 and 2 children to read and write, without any mention of religion. It is detrimental in that these people, being strangers to Canada, will likely have no understanding of the Indian people or the problems they face in their present transitional phase from total reserve culture to assimilation into the white world. This last aspect will be explored more fully later in this section.

#### Education Problems Today

The reserve children today face many problems with regard to education. Among these are a very high drop-out rate from high school; teachers who often lack an understanding of the transitional problems of Indians; inadequate bus facilities for the children who commute daily to the nearby towns; and over-crowded living conditions that make studying almost impossible.

### School Drop-Outs

According to the Indian Affairs' publication, Indian Affairs Facts and Figures, February, 1966, over the past 16 years more and more Indian children are staying in school through Grade 12. Table 1 shows the number of Indian children who entered Grade 9 and the number in each of the succeeding Grades through 12 in all Canadian schools. As the table indicates, the number of Indian children reaching high school has significantly increased. In addition, the percentage of children who enter Grade 9 and remain through Grade 12 has tripled in the past 16 years. However, the percentages in all cases are lower than for either the total Canadian or rural Canadian averages. The figures for 1965-66 for the Saddle Lake Reserve are slightly higher than for the national Indian figures. There are 14 students in Grade 9 and only four in Grade 12, a percentage of 28.5.

Explanations for the drop-out rate of Saddle Lake children are few and, perhaps, somewhat vague. However, they are the only explanations offered by the reserve parents and children, the interviewers, and the Indian Affairs Branch. The three basic explanations are: inadequate educational programs for the Indian children in the area; poor administration of the residential school in St. Paul; and the poor educational environment of the reserve homes.

CHAPTER VII TABLE 1

#### PER CENT INDIAN CHILDREN IN GRADE 9 REACHING GRADE 12\*

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	% From Grade 9-12
1948-49	375	144	62	24	6.5
1957-58	1,024	472	288	176	17.5
1961-62	1,294	691	417	261	20.0
1964-65	2,309	1,212	726	481	21.0

\* Indian Affairs Branch, Indian Affairs, Facts and Figures, Ottawa, February, 1966, page 45.

### Educational Programs

All of the respondents in the sample stated that one of the reasons for the drop-out rate was the children's lack of interest in the schoolwork. There is, in fact, no composite high school in the St. Paul area. Construction of a composite high school will begin in September, 1966, and admission to the school will begin in the Fall of 1967. This will apparently be beneficial to the re-

serve children who, as we learned in discussions with them, are not interested in the regular academic courses now being offered in the St. Paul high schools. Of the four reserve children presently in Grade 12, two are girls who are attending the Jasper Place Composite High School in Edmonton. Many of the parents are reluctant to have their children go to school in Edmonton and this prevents many of the reserve students from attending vocational training schools.

#### BLEUQUILLS RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

From interviews with the reserve parents, children, and members of the Indian Affairs Branch staff, it appears that the poor administration of the Bluequills Indian Residential School in St. Paul is a major reason for the high drop-out rate of reserve Catholic students.

Bluequills is operated by the Catholic Church as a boarding and day school for Catholic reserve children. It is totally subsidized by the federal government under the provisions of the Indian Act. This same Indian Act, however, prohibits the Indian Affairs Branch from having any voice in the selection of supervisory staff or the administration of the school.

The Indian parents and students claim that the administration is the major cause for children leaving school before completing Grade 12. They claim that the priest in charge of Bluequills is much too strict; the children have little opportunity to mingle with the opposite sex and are prohibited from participating in sports together in the afternoons. In addition, they object to the priest's more permissive attitude to some of the girls and the perceived reasons for this. Some of these girls have been permitted to visit their parents more than the one weekend per month that is the rule of the school, and some have received gifts of extra money and clothing from the priest. The two female interviewers spoke to five of the teenage girls who have left school and they all stated that advances made to them by the priest had been the main reason for their leaving. (Subsequent enquiries made by researchers received sufficient corroboration from the Indian Affairs Branch for the statements to be included as considerations in this report. It has also been learned that the priest in question has since been transferred to a reserve in Saskatchewan. Although the people were in favor of the transfer, they felt that this type of action was only a short-run measure because the system itself remained unchanged.)

The root of the problem, as it appears to some of the Indian Affairs Branch staff, is the seemingly inadequate supervision of the residential school by the Church authorities. The supervisory staff seems both unqualified and unwilling to attempt more modern and appropriate methods of supervision of children in the Indian residential schools. According to the responses to the questionnaire, the Indian people oppose only the administration of the school, not the existence of the institution. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents thought it was better for the children to live in a residential school than to commute by bus daily. Their justifications were built around the environment of the reserve homes and the inability of the parents to provide adequate clothing for the children.

The "facts" stated above are facts to the reserve members because that is how they perceive the situation and respond to it. The overly-restrictive methods of the Bluequills supervisory staff has apparently resulted in the high drop-out rate for many Catholic students on the reserve.

#### Living Conditions and Educational Environment

The high drop-out rate among Protestant children on the reserve seems closely related to the poor educational environment in the reserve homes. The average reserve home has 7.5 members with an average of 2.6 persons per room. Many of the homes have rooms which are separated only by a curtain or screen partition. Thus, the amount of privacy a person can have within his home is almost non-existent. In addition, 41.2 per cent of the homes have only one or two rooms. It is under these conditions that the reserve student who is living at home must study. The average reserve family has five members under 21 years of age with 2.5 attending school. The reserve children who commute to the schools by bus every day must attempt to do all their studying at home because the bus brings the children back to the reserve immediately after classes are over.

In addition, as indicated earlier, quite often reserve parents in mid-winter will keep their children home when they lack warm clothing rather than let the children go to school and possibly become severely ill. This, too, contributes to an inadequate school performance, and eventually to dropping out of school.

Another deterrent to Indian education, reported by the reserve students,

is lack of food. Frequently the children will go to school without even a sandwich for lunch. The students said that under these conditions it is almost impossible to sit in class all day and maintain an interest in the work. The children from the Saddle Lake Reserve are not given free lunches in their schools, though some of the nearby reserves do have this program. The entire sample felt that the reserve children should be given free lunches in school, the justification being that most reserve families are poor and cannot always feed the children.

#### Teachers

One of the apparent obstacles to Indian educational advancement is the teachers' lack of understanding of the Indian transitional problems. The previously-stated incident of hiring two people from the Philippines to teach in the reserve day school merely demonstrates the extreme outcome of the rule. However, from discussions with members of the Educational Department of the Indian Affairs Branch, it appears that many of the teachers in areas of high Indian population are largely unaware of the problems the Indian is now facing in his transition from reserve culture to assimilation into the white world.

The University of Alberta has instituted a program of courses for people who plan to teach in schools with Indian pupils. However, the fruits of this new curriculum will not be seen for a few years and, even then, they will not be widespread. The people who are teaching in Indian areas at present have little training in this sphere and have no opportunity to acquire the adequate training. The Education Department of the Indian Affairs Branch in St. Paul is attempting to set up a one-week seminar immediately prior to the start of school, but there is apparently no enthusiasm for such a course in the St. Paul area. Thus, the Branch is limited to giving a short course to the two people who are arriving from the Philippines.

#### School Buses

The parents on the Saddle Lake Reserve are planning to keep their children out of school during registration week this Fall unless the children are provided with a better bus service. The parents all complained about the buses to the interviewers. Their complaints are substantiated by the Supervisor of the Education Department of the St. Paul Indian Affairs office. The Supervisor reported that one day last winter when the temperature was 30 degrees below

zero, he rode on one of the school buses from the reserve to St. Paul. He was dressed much more warmly than any of the children on the bus, yet when the bus arrived in St. Paul he was so cold that he found himself unable to speak for some minutes.

### School Boards

The root of the bus problem seems to be the fact that the reserve is not part of the larger school districts in the area and is thus not included in the school-bus negotiations of the local towns. The reserve is a theoretical municipality that in reality is financed and administered by the Indian Affairs Branch. Thus the Branch's budget determines the availability of such things as school-bus service and school lunches.

The local school boards do not include any reserve Indian members because the reserves are not technically in the school districts. The reserve children only go to the local schools because of federal-provincial agreements to this effect. The lack of representation of Indian people on local school boards was criticized by the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teachers Federation in a brief to the Honourable J. R. Nicholson on April 28, 1965. The Federation stated that "where Indian children are attending schools under the jurisdiction of a Board of School Trustees, we urge that there should be appropriate Indian parent representation on these Boards, and, if necessary, that the Indian Act and Regulations be amended as required to make this not only possible, but mandatory." The Federation based this statement largely upon Article 26,3 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, "(We believe that) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

### Summary

Statistically the Canadian Indian population has made great strides in education in the last two decades. For instance, as Table 2 indicates, in 1949 there were only 24 Indian children in Grade 12 in all of Canada. By June, 1965, there were 481 in Grade 12. Similarly, in 1949 there were only nine Indian children in universities across Canada. During the 1964-65 school year, 88 Indian students were enrolled in universities. These figures, when compared to the 55 per cent increase in Indian population over the same period, make it appear as if the Indian population is making great strides in the field of edu-

cation. These "strides" are still very small. In 1949 one Indian person in every 15,000 was attending a university. In 1965, the ratio was one person in every 2,400. These ratios are still far smaller than for Canada as a whole.

CHAPTER VII TABLE 2

INDIAN CHILDREN REACHING UNIVERSITY \*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Grade 12</u>	<u>University</u>	<u>Indian Population</u>
1948-49	24	9	136,407
1957-58	176	27	
1964-65	481	88	211,389

\* Indian Affairs Branch, Indian Affairs, Facts and Figures, Ottawa, February, 1966, page 45.

The causes of the Indian students' lack of educational achievement appear to be many. On the Saddle Lake Reserve the focus is on three basic topics: poverty; the inadequacy of the Indian Act; and the inappropriate curriculums offered to the children.

The widespread poverty on the reserve results in poorly-fed and poorly-clothed children who must travel to school each day to compete with well-fed and well-clothed white students. The continued comparison promotes a sense of inferiority in the Indian child which might lead him to withdraw from school instead of remaining in school to reach higher grades. The lack of food and clothing also makes it difficult for the child to concentrate on his class-work.

To do any homework seems to require massive determination by the Indian child. His small home usually has six or seven other members and, in the winter months, they are more than likely all in the house.

The Indian Act, as presently constituted, has aspects which appear detrimental to Indian education. One is the restriction against reserve members being on local school boards. A second is the restriction imposed upon the Indian Affairs Branch with regard to supervision of the Indian residential schools. The Indian reserves are not considered part of the municipal school districts. The Indian children are permitted to attend the provincial schools only because there is an agreement to this effect between the federal and provincial governments. Thus, the reserve parents may not participate as full members of the local school boards. There is, in fact, no representation of either the Indian people or the Indian Affairs Branch on the school boards.

The Indian Act requires that the Indian Affairs Branch totally finance the Indian residential schools, no matter what religious denomination is running the institution. Yet the Branch does not have any authority in either the selection of the institution's supervisory staff or in the administration of the institution. This lack of authority by the Branch seems to be detrimental to Indian education because the residential schools have, in the reserve's eyes, historically been run poorly and continue to be. The Branch's Education Department has the knowledge and personnel to improve the residential schools but has no authority to do so.

The St. Paul area has no composite high school or other vocational training school. The majority of the Indian children, it appears, are not interested in the academic subjects being offered because the children are apparently concerned with learning "skills" in order to get jobs. A composite high school will be in operation within one year but there are still no jobs for the people in the area, once they acquire the skills. Most of the reserve members are reluctant to leave the reserve for jobs in other areas. The schools offer no re-orientation programs for Indian children -- there are no re-orientation programs whatsoever for the Indian people. Thus, the Indian children have mostly tales and second-hand recollections of other areas as their bases for deciding whether to leave the reserve, their friends and relatives, to enter the "white world". In addition, there are few guidance councillors and curriculum specialists in St. Paul. There is only one guidance councillor in the St. Paul area and he must divide his time amongst all of the schools there. Also, the councillor obviously has not time to spend with the Indian parents and children, discussing the possibilities for the children. The Indian Affairs office in St. Paul has one man who acts as a guidance councillor for all of the five reserves in the area. He, too, is pressed for time and can visit very few of the families or children in need.

#### Educational Opportunities for Adults

This section will describe three topics: adult education programs on the reserve; upgrading and technical programs for workers; and an on-going apprenticeship program on the reserve that was created by a reserve member and was unknown to the Indian Affairs Branch.

Adult Education Programs on the Reserve

In the Fall of 1965 the Indian Affairs Branch sent an Adult Education Director to the Saddle Lake Reserve. Her assignment was to teach illiterate Indians to read and write. When she found that almost everyone could read and write she reconstructed the program. She organized classes in English and mathematics -- at about the Grades 4 to 8 level -- and she started a program of weekly discussions, inviting members of the neighboring towns and Edmonton to address the reserve members. The speakers included the Mayor and Fire Chief of St. Paul, a member of the Indian Affairs Branch staff in Edmonton, and many others. Their purpose was to explain the problems and progress of the non-reserve world and to stimulate discussion about the reserve. The attendance at these meetings was large -- larger than at Band meetings on the reserve -- and everyone we interviewed who had attended was enthusiastic about them. Incidentally, none of the people appeared to view the meetings as a form of entertainment but rather many people participated with questions and comments.

In June, the Indian Affairs budget for the 1966-67 year was established. The Adult Education part of the budget was cut by one third and the Adult Education Director felt that this would restrict the program simply to courses. Thus, when the Branch offered her a promotion -- as an Adult Education Co-ordinator working out of Ottawa -- she accepted it and left the reserve. Two things happened when she took the promotion. First, in the year that she was on the reserve she had become very well liked by the Band members; they thought of her as a friend and a capable person. Thus, the people were upset by her departure and felt resentful toward the Indian Affairs Branch, claiming the Branch transferred her. As one man stated -- and his statement was echoed by many others -- "Every time we get a good person on the reserve they transfer him. They must really dislike us. Every time someone comes along who starts doing things to help the reserve they get rid of him." The people always mention a similar incident that involved an Agricultural Director on the reserve in the 1940's. During his stay he had the whole reserve achieve self-sufficiency as farmers -- many even keeping pigs and chickens for the first time. Though he apparently left the reserve by choice the people claim that he was transferred by the Branch. When he left, the reserve's economy began to decline sharply and has not rebounded since. Thus, the people feel resentful, assuming that the Branch is trying to keep the Indians in a poor position in society and therefore transfers all their "good" staff members to other places.

The second effect of the Adult Education Director's departure was the abandoning of all the programs she had planned for the 1966-67 year. One program in particular would appear to have been very helpful to the reserve -- a community newspaper. She had hoped to start a newspaper for the five reserves in the area. The editor of the St. Paul Journal had offered his presses for the enterprise and had volunteered his knowledge and abilities as manager and co-ordinator of the paper. The project had many possibilities to offer. It could teach reserve members to work on a newspaper, it could inform members of new government programs for the reserve, and it could answer their questions and inform them about old programs. It could stimulate criticisms and ideas about the reserve and the Indian Affairs Branch, and it could be an avenue to publicize job opportunities or training programs. It could stimulate an exchange of ideas among the five reserves, and it could develop a sense of community among the people that is presently lacking.

However, the budget is cut by one third and the Adult Education Director's replacement appears to be resigned to "educating illiterates". Therefore, the newspaper project and last year's program of speakers both seem to be unlikely for this year.

#### Vocational Training Programs

The Province of Alberta has had vocational training and upgrading programs for about 35 years. However, it appears that until recently the Indian population was not participating in these programs to any significant extent. Recently the provincial government started the Fort McMurray Vocational School. This project, which is built around training people for jobs in Athabasca Tar Sands industries, has attempted to recruit Indian and Metis people for training.

The Indian Affairs Branch pays for the tuition and allowance of all Treaty Indians in the project. As of May 31, 1966, there have been 60 Treaty Indians enrolled in the program. As Table 3 indicates, 27 of the men have completed the program and 20 of these are presently employed. An additional 22 men have dropped out of the program and 11 are still studying in the program.

## CHAPTER VII TABLE 3

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S COST FOR INDIAN PEOPLE  
IN FORT MCMURRAY PROGRAM\*

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Money Spent by Indian Affairs Branch</u>	<u>Money Spent for Person having Graduated or left the Program</u>
Graduated	27	20	\$20,280	\$780
Dropped Out	22	-	6,022	274
In Training	11	-	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	60	20	\$26,302	

\* Statistics compiled from records in the Education Department of the Indian Affairs Branch in Edmonton.

The expenditure by the Branch appears to be wise economically. Twenty of the 49 men who have left the program are now working. Most, if not all, of these men were previously on social assistance. Thus, the Branch, viewing this as a long-run venture, has probably saved itself a great deal of money that would have been spent to maintain these men and their families on social assistance. More important, however, is the fact that these 20 men now have the opportunity to regain their self-respect and pride, as well as to contribute meaningfully to society.

There have been five men from the Saddle Lake Reserve and Good Fish Lake Reserve who have participated in the Fort McMurray program. One of these men did not complete the program but the other four did. However, none of these men is presently working in the field that he was trained for. They are all back on the reserves unemployed. The Branch in St. Paul has never done a follow-up on these men to find out why they are not using their newly-acquired skills. The interviewers were, unfortunately, not able to interview these men because they were all down in Lethbridge working in the sugar beet fields during the summer and, as was explained previously, it was almost impossible to locate individuals in the wide area around Lethbridge. However, the interviewers learned from the other reserve members that the men were offered jobs in Fort McMurray but refused to live there because they did not like the area. Presumably they tried to find jobs near the reserve but their training and the certificates they received were not "papers" that skilled men normally have and the men quickly realized this and became frustrated.

If the reserve members' interpretations were correct, it appears that two things were inadequate in the program. First, the men were not trained adequately to find employment anywhere in the province; rather they were trained specifically for the Fort McMurray project. Second, the Branch did not advise the men of this fact; if they had, some of the men would probably not have entered the program.

The program offers many of the Indian people a chance to learn skills that can be put to work immediately upon completion of the training. Forty per cent of the men who left the program and 74 per cent of the men who graduated are now working. Thus, the program is highly effective. However, more people could be helped in this manner if there were more programs in the province and if the men were trained adequately to afford them the opportunity to work in more places with their newly-acquired skills.

#### An On-Going Apprenticeship Program

The Research Assistant lived with a family on the reserve that was not on social assistance. The husband is a carpenter who works for the Branch building "welfare houses" on the reserve. This man is officially considered by the Branch as a supervisor of construction. The Agency pays him \$520 per house for himself and the laborers he "supervises". Since a house would take seven or eight weeks for one man to construct alone, the supervisor works with one laborer to complete the work in three or four weeks and thus guarantees to both a reasonable salary for the work. The pay scale, it might be noted, was established 15 years ago. For the past two years, this supervisor has been hiring some of the reserve's unemployed and unskilled youths as assistants. He pays them a wage and trains them while they are helping him complete the house. In 1965 three teenagers "trained" with the supervisor and in 1966 they were all working in Peace River earning \$2.60 per hour on construction jobs. In 1966 the supervisor has been training an ambitious 33-year old man and this man will probably continue to work on the reserve for the Indian Affairs Branch. The Branch office in St. Paul apparently knew nothing of the supervisor's activities and therefore did not attempt to help him with additional financial aid.

Starting in the Fall of 1966, the supervisor will receive an additional \$520 per house. This extra money, however, appears to be paid because of the realization that the new welfare houses will take longer to build, and not be-

cause of any interest in aiding the apprenticeship program. The new houses will differ from the old ones in that there will be finished basements in the new houses while the old houses had no basements. Because this will require an additional one or two weeks of construction time, the Agency decided to increase the fee per house. From conversations with the Indian Affairs staff, it does not appear that any of the additional money was intended to aid the training program. The construction supervisor is a man concerned with helping the reserve's jobless youths find a career for themselves rather than allowing them to remain jobless on the reserve. The Agency's apparent lack of concern in helping this man could possibly eliminate his "program". If assistance were given -- in the form of increased money or an expanded program -- it would help the reserve and its young people immeasurably.

#### Summary

The reserve people are offered few educational programs that would enable them to learn new skills and go out into the white world on an equal basis with whites. The training and upgrading program at Fort McMurray is adequate as a system of producing men who are qualified to work in the jobs at Fort McMurray. However, it does not go far enough in that it does not train the men sufficiently for them to find jobs in other parts of Alberta.

The Adult Education programs that are designed for reserves are inadequate. The people do not have to be taught to read and write. Last year's Adult Education Director attempted to use the program as a form of community development work. She felt, correctly it appears, that this was the best education for the adult reserve member. Yet, the Ottawa office of the Indian Affairs Branch cut her budget and this forced her to leave the reserve and terminate her plans of the 1966-67 year. These plans included the start of a newspaper for the five reserves in the area, something that is essential as a means of communicating new information to reserve members and as a means of creating a sense of community on the reserves.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RESERVE INDIAN AND THE LAW

Two of the interviewers went to the Fort Saskatchewan Jail to interview treaty Indians. The interviewers found that the women all had the same history prior to being arrested, while the men's histories varied a bit.

The purpose of this section is to describe the apparent pattern that has led many reserve Indians into conflict with the law and the apparent consequences of their experiences in courts and jails. The intention is to define the pattern of the problems and discuss the Indian people's recommendations for programs to avert these conflicts in the future.

This section is concerned solely with the problems Indians face when they leave the reserve. The conflicts that arise between the Indian on the reserve and the police appear to be common for all societies and thus require no special programs; therefore, we are concentrating upon the Indian person who leaves the reserve.

#### The Female Offenders

Six women were interviewed at the jail -- all of them had been arrested for vagrancy and all were involved in both prostitution and alcoholism. Most of the women left the reserves in their late teens or early twenties and came to Edmonton. The girls came to Edmonton without knowing anyone there, or where they could find work and places to live. All of the girls who worked were waitresses in cafes, but soon quit their jobs and began to live with white men who, as the girls stated, treated them well for a few weeks and then beat them. While with the white men, all of the girls began to drink and, in time, to drink heavily. When the men left them, the girls had to find a source of income that would provide them with enough money to finance their alcoholism. All of the girls interviewed had turned to prostitution.

Two of the girls got involved with narcotics and this forced them deeper into prostitution because it is a more expensive habit to maintain than alcoholism.

Some of the girls interviewed had been arrested six or seven

times and all said that at various times they had tried to change back to having normal lives. However, none of them found anybody to help them change, and they could not attempt to alone for any length of time. One girl had lasted for one and a half years but "depression and loneliness" drove her back to alcohol and prostitution.

When the interviewer asked them whether they tried any of the rehabilitation agencies for help, the girls said that they had but that only Alcoholics Anonymous was at all appropriate to their needs. The girls felt that they had only one alternative when they were released from jail -- returning to prostitution. The following statement by one of the girls is typical of the comments of the women interviewed: "(When I leave jail) I would like to go to a hostel run by a woman who isn't out to build a reputation at the girl's expense -- a woman who understands and will help even if a person fails." The girls also stated that they dislike church-run groups that try to help the girls, because the women in these groups do not really appear to care about the girls and see them only as potential converts.

When asked whether they had heard about the Hilltop Rehabilitation Centre, one of the girls stated that the place was totally inadequate for rehabilitation, and that the nurse in charge had no apparent special qualifications to rehabilitate alcoholics.

Thus, it appears that the women who get into trouble with the law have no place to go after they leave jail except back to their lives as they had lived them before. As the girls stated, they need and want a rehabilitation centre that is run by the government -- "not church groups or do-gooders" -- and has qualified counsellors.

The first experience in jail, for all of these women, made them aware of the various illegal means of making money. Representative of all the girls' statements about prison was the following: "I learned more horrible things here (prison) than anywhere else." In prison, the first offender comes into contact with "repeaters" and is exposed to the total criminal scope of the region. It would seem beneficial to the individuals and the community as well if first offenders for alcoholism, narcotics addiction and prostitution were sent to rehabilitation centres rather than jail.

As a means of preventing these occurrences in the future, the girls recommended that a centre should be set up in Edmonton which will tell reserve people where they can find jobs and places to live. We think this comment points up the unavailability of information about the city on the reserves. There is both the National Employment Service and the Metis-Indian Friendship Centre in Edmonton; yet most of the girls did not appear to know about them. What is obviously needed is an orientation program that would provide reserve people with information about what is available to them in the cities.

#### The Male Offenders

Five men were interviewed in the jail. Three of the Indian men interviewed were arrested, they said, because of alcoholism on or near the reserve. Alcoholism seems to be the main cause of arrest among the Indian men, historically. All five of the men had been previously arrested between two and five times for alcoholism. There were no repetitions of crimes, other than alcoholism, for any of the men.

There were two men who were not under arrest for alcoholism. Both men were arrested in Edmonton, one for involvement with a female minor, and the other for allegedly assaulting a taxicab driver.

With regard to the men who were arrested solely for alcoholism, all of them stated that they are frustrated by the lack of jobs in their area. None can apparently find work or obtain assistance to start farming their own land on the reserve. All of them stated that their boyhood ambitions were to farm their land.

This lack of opportunity for meaningful employment -- and thus a meaningful existence -- seemed, to the interviewers, to be the leading cause of many of the reserve's members turning to alcohol in the past few years. We were told that only within recent years had alcohol become a problem on the reserve.

There is no way for the reserve's men to presently find activities to keep them occupied, and give them self-respect. As one of the men stated, "The only time I can feel like a man is when I am drinking."

Thus, the problem of alcoholism among reserve men -- and their eventual problems with the law -- seems tied up intimately with the poor economic situation on the reserve. A change in this economic climate might be the vehicle for terminating the problems the Indian male has with the law.

## CHAPTER IX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The limited time available for the study required that the three interviewers become involved in the intimate life of the reserve in order to view the conditions with some regularity. To this end the three interviewers (two female Indians and one white male) lived on the reserve with the people for the eight weeks of the study. The first three weeks were spent socializing with the reserve members. This was done to achieve a rapport with the people. The final five weeks were spent in interviewing, using a questionnaire. One hundred and two of the 180 families on the reserve were interviewed. The 102 families represented a cross-section of the reserve with regard to four major aspects: religion; age; welfare status; and size of family.

In an attempt to interview as many of the reserve members as possible, and also to learn about all facets of Indian life, part of the study was conducted in the Lethbridge sugar beet area and in the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol. Interviews in both of these places were crucial to the study. The Lethbridge interviews were essential to the study in order to find out the reasons for, and consequences of, the Indians' work migration each summer. The Gaol interviews were important in finding out the problems Indians encounter when they leave the reserve and enter the white world.

#### Conclusions

The Indian people have always been treated as separate from the rest of Canadian society. The very term reserve, as defined in the dictionaries, means to set aside for future use, or to keep back for special purposes in future. Also, it means avoidance of intimacy; reticence and silence.

This was the plight of the Canadian Indian in the past. Now as Canada becomes more and more affluent, the "affluency syndrome" is opera-

ting. We feel guilty about the plight of the heretofore neglected Indian and we have begun to force our social ways upon him without consulting him. Unfortunately, the process seems too far entrenched to simply stop it, because that would leave the Indian population in limbo. Therefore, it seems incumbent upon the Canadian population to help the Indian people become full citizens of Canada.

The present situation on the Saddle Lake reserve seems to be almost totally destructive for any chance of progress by the people. The average family has seven to eight members, five of whom are under twenty-one. Four of the five children are of school age. Fifty-two percent of the homes are one, two or three room log cabins, and eighty percent of the families have only contaminated water to drink - twenty-three percent have only creek and slough water. At one time or another, thirty percent of the families have had a member who has had tuberculosis, and thirty-three percent have, presently, at least one member who is disabled. The average life span of an Indian person is eighteen years less than his non-Indian Canadian counterpart - thirty-one years less if we consider deaths occurring within the first year of life. Fifty-five percent of the families have had at least one child die before it was one year old and ten percent have had between five and nine children die at this age.

Less than ten percent of the reserve's 63,000 acres is being used for farming, despite the fact that the reserve land is probably among the best in the province. The reserve members do not have enough money to purchase the necessary equipment to start farming. Only twenty-three and one-half percent of the families have a member who works for at least nine months of the year. These families have an average yearly income of \$2,700. The unemployed families (seventy-six and one-half percent) - receiving welfare for at least nine months of the year - have average yearly incomes of \$1,178. The average income per household on the reserve was \$1,315 in 1965. These low figures are further diminished when it is realized that many of the households have at least two potential wage earners.

With regard to Canada's efforts in Indian education, the inadequacies are amplified by the misnomer "integration". For all intents and purposes the education process - and the total program with regard to Indian life - has been one of assimilation. The Indian has been told

to undertake the white man's ways. Yet, because all of our policies are not coordinated, they become obstacles to each other. The Indian people are apparently enthusiastic about "integrated education" yet the children drop out of school at sixteen years of age. One of the main reasons for the drop-outs is the reserve's poor economy. Ninety-one percent of the families receive social assistance for at least three months of the year, and seventy-four percent receive welfare for at least nine months of the year. The welfare payments are so inadequate that the children are often required to stay home from school by their parents because there is no food to make lunches and because the children do not have clothing for the cold winter days. When the children do attend school, their hunger sometimes prevents them from concentrating on their classwork, and their shame over their inferior clothing - in comparison to the white children's clothes - makes them want to leave school as quickly as possible. At home, the overcrowded conditions make it impossible for them to study.

The Indian Act that made Indians wards of the federal government also prohibits the children from attending provincial schools unless a provincial-federal agreement is signed. These agreements do not stipulate that reserve Indians can be on the local school boards so Indian parents cannot have a voice in deciding their children's education.

The following pages contain recommendations for new policies, and changes in old policies, that we feel will aid the Indian population in becoming full citizens of Alberta and of Canada.

#### Economic and Community Development

If the Indian people are to remain on the reserves, which are basically agricultural lands, the reserve economies must be stimulated and there must be a development of a sense of community amongst the people. To this end we offer the following recommendations:

- a) An emphasis on cooperative farming and ranching. This implies a long-term study of the land use and making certain consequent reforms.
- b) Wider use of Social Science specialists to make field surveys relative to the economic potential of reserve land and reserve residents.
- c) Increasing amounts of capital for agricultural development and business development on reserves.

- d) Incentives for outside businesses to develop industry on or near the reserves by granting tax exemptions for a given number of years.
- e) Continued improvement of transportation and utilities on reserves so that industries will be attracted.
- f) Exploration of the credit problems Indians encounter, and the negotiation with private interests to loosen up credit for Indians who demonstrate competency and initiative.
- g) Opening up the reserve to settlement by non-Indian families - a means to reduce the Indian ghetto idea. There could be an exchange of reserve land for non-reserve land to facilitate the integration of families through association.
- h) Increasing grants to Band Councils for recreational projects.
- i) Greater emphasis on relocation of Indian families to areas of employment opportunities - on a permanent basis.
- j) Improved job placement programs in reserve areas.
- k) The creation of a newspaper for the reserve communities.
- l) An intensive program to raise the level of health and housing on the reserve.
- m) More opportunities for work on the reserves, as in the Community Employment Program (Winter Works Project) which was available during the winter of 1964-65.
- n) A program to supply birth control information to the reserves' families.

#### Education

- a) Expansion of the areas' kindergarten programs and the eventual adoption of nursery school programs.
- b) Improvement of the transportation facilities for Indian children on and off the reserve.
- c) A conscious effort to raise the educational standards in reserve schools and Indian Residential schools. Though both of these schools are being phased-out by the Indian Affairs Branch, they will probably remain in use for at least ten more years. It has seemed obvious to the interviewers that these schools, as presently operated, are detrimental to the educational advancement of the Indian people.

- d) Continued emphasis on integrated schooling, but there is a need for continuous research regarding scholastic achievement. Students should be assigned to programs in appropriate institutions wherever they may be, so that the full potential of the students will be realized.
- e) Granting of subsidies to provincial school authorities so they can employ curriculum and guidance specialists who can further the education of Indian children in an integrated setting.
- f) Wider use of educational television in the reserve areas, because a more vicarious experience is needed by Indian children.
- g) Frequent use of field trips and excursions to build up the children's background about non-Indian communities.
- h) Training programs to instruct the teachers in Indian regions about the transition problems Indian people are facing in their adjustment from the reserve community to the non-Indian community.
- i) A gradual transfer of the supervisory services for federal schools to the provincial government to insure that Indian children are receiving the same education as non-Indian children.
- j) The incorporation of reserves into present school districts and divisions so that parents can be elected as members of school boards.
- k) Designation of Indians as advisors to provincial school boards until such time as residents on reserves can elect their own members.
- l) Construction of hostels for integrated school students in all cases where the reserve standard of living is seriously below that of the neighbouring non-Indian community. These hostels should be supervised by a government agency which will employ people who are knowledgeable about the modern supervisory aspects of institutional living.
- m) The provision of trained Social Workers and Welfare Workers to insure both the adequacy of child-placement, in cases of adoption or foster care, and the follow-ups on these place-

ments. At present there are no follow-ups on these placements and no qualified staff members in local Branch offices to undertake these duties. There should be an attempt to have these caseworkers function under the same case load as in the rest of the province.

- n) The introduction of lunch programs for all children.
- o) The expansion of adult education programs, linking these with community and economic development. This should be a joint effort through the Indian Affairs Branch, the local non-Indian community and the Indian community.
- p) More thorough and effective occupational guidance programs in more areas of the province. These can perhaps be supplemented with annual tours of business and industry.

#### The Indian Affairs Bureau

This paper does not include a section on the structure of the Indian Affairs Branch because the interviewers felt it would be a bit presumptuous on our part to attempt a critique of the Branch after so short a period of actual contact with it. We did, however, find many shortcomings in the local Indian Affairs Branch office (St. Paul) and, through our discussions with Branch members in Edmonton, we offer the following recommendations concerning the Branch's supervision of the reserves:

- a) The majority of the reserve members are somewhat antagonistic toward the Branch. This, it appeared to the interviewers, was due to the local staffs' apparent lack of genuine concern for the Indian people. Rather, the local staff appeared to contain men who have been in the Branch for many years and have, since the advent of functionalism in the local offices, become overly concerned with simply maintaining their positions in the bureaucracy. The reserve members do not view the Branch office as either a place to go for aid or advice, or an institution which is genuinely interested in helping the reserve. What appears to be needed is:

- i) Recruitment of adequately trained field personnel; i.e. welfare administrators who are trained social workers, development officers who are economists and agricultural specialists who are trained agriculturists.

- ii) Employment of more Indian people in the local as well as regional offices of the Indian Affairs Branch. At present, there are no Indian people working in the St. Paul office, although two years ago, the superintendent of the office was an Indian.
  - iii) Up-grading of qualifications for the staff.
- b) There should be more frequent consultation between the Ottawa and regional offices, including inspection team trips to various regions by the Ottawa staff.
  - c) There should be a decentralization of programs, not only from the national to regional or provincial levels, but from the regional level to the local offices. It appears that Indian reserves vary considerably, both in their economic and social potentials, and the attitudes and aspirations of the inhabitants. Therefore, inflexible national or regional policies only serve to stifle the capable and creative field workers and administrators while inhibiting growth potentials on the individual reserves.
  - d) The Indian Affairs Branch has recently initiated work on five year development programs for the reserves. The case at the St. Paul agency is possibly typical of the incidents in many other local offices. The Agency's superintendent, having only two days notice from the Ottawa office, completed his five year program for the reserve without consulting any Band member or the Band Council. This lack of concern with the people's attitudes and aspirations appears indicative of the Branch's relationship with the people at the local level.
  - e) The local offices - St. Paul in particular from our observations - have an especially competent staff in their education department. These men - all University trained and former teachers - have ideas and potential programs, as the interviewer observed from discussions with them, which appear to be five years ahead of ideas of the other staff members in their utility for the Indian people. However, because of the inflexibility of the budgets and "edicts" from Ottawa, the Agency's superintendent stifles their attempts to put these plans into effect.

On the regional level the majority of the Edmonton office's staff appear to be competent, sincere people. However, most of them also appear stifled in their attempts to help the Indian people progress. The deterrent to their ambitions appears to be both the inflexible administrative structure of the Branch and the inadequately trained field personnel. Possibly the least stifled department in the Branch is the community development department but the effects of its work will not be visible for at least five to ten years because of the nature of the program.

- f) The shortage of staff in the local office - five men in the St. Paul office to supervise five reserves containing approximately 3,500 people - produces no real contact or communication between the reserve and the Agency. In 1966, the St. Paul Agency is tripling the amount of territory under its jurisdiction, but due to "budget deficiencies" will only add two additional men to the staff.
- g) An avenue of aid and improvement for both Branch and reserves would be involving the Band Councils in the administration of social assistance on the reserves. The Hobbema and Blood reserves have used Indian Welfare Aides to considerable advantage. This measure would be beneficial in increasing the local Agency's staff and insuring that the Welfare administrator has actual knowledge of the circumstances of the family he is giving assistance to.
- h) The Branch's Health, Education and Welfare programs appear to need coordination through consultation between specialists and representatives from the Indian people. This might alleviate the present situation whereby one isolated program proves to be an obstacle to another isolated program. It is relevant that the St. Paul Branch office has not had a staff meeting during the entire one year period that the new superintendent has been there.
- i) There should be periodic research to determine the standard of living on the reserves in relation to the non-Indian community. There should be a transfer of special services, such as community development, welfare, health and education to the respective

provincial departments, to insure that the Indian population receives the same benefits as all other citizens of the province.

- j) There should be a greater emphasis on research to assess past programs and to plan new programs.
- k) The Branch should engage in activities to encourage greater movement toward self-government by the Band Councils.
- l) The Branch should undertake a massive public relations program to educate the public in general concerning the complexities of Indians' problems.
- m) Underlying many of the above recommendations is the need to rewrite the Indian Act. This Act appears more detrimental to the Indian people in the restriction it imposes upon them than it is beneficial in the guarantees it offers to them.







# HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

